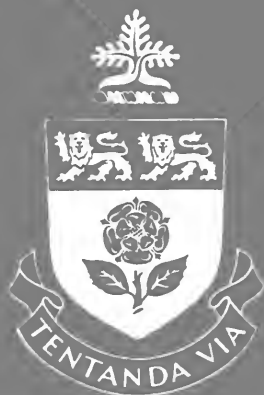


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ZENOBIAS;

Queen of Palmyra.

A POEM.

BY THE
REV. ÆNEAS McDONELL DAWSON.



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PREFACE.

“MODERN Europe has produced several illustrious women who have sustained with glory the weight of Empire; nor is our own age destitute of such distinguished characters. But, if we except the doubtful achievements of Semiramis, Zenobia is perhaps the only female whose superior genius broke through the servile indolence imposed on her sex by the climate and manners of Asia. She claimed her descent from the Macedonian Kings of Ægypt, equalled in beauty her ancestor, Cleopatra, and far surpassed that Princess in chastity and valor. Zenobia was esteemed the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex. . . . Her voice was strong and harmonious. Her manly understanding was strengthened and adorned by study. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but possessed in equal perfection, the Greek, the Syriac and the Ægyptian languages. She had drawn up for her own use an epitome of Oriental history, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato, under the tuition of the sublime Longinus.” (*Gibbon's Roman Empire.*)

In the following lines nothing will be found incompatible with the character and actions of Zenobia as handed down by

history. In one thing the writer must say that he dissents from the illustrious historian just quoted. He relates that the celebrated Queen, after her defeat, abandoned her wise and faithful Counsellors, Longinus, Zabdas and others, to the fury of the Conqueror. It was not in her power to save them. If her own life was spared, she owed this good fortune to the caprice of the terrible Aurelian. It was not according to her character, any more than it was in her power, to purchase life for herself by selling that of her advisers.



ZENOBIAS ;

QUEEN OF PALMYRA.

I.

Extent of the Palmyrene State—The City adorned with fine buildings—Temples, Palaces, Colisee, Portico—Magnificent streets—Zenobia cultivates the Fine Arts, and favors Liberty—The Inhabitants—Contrast with other States of the time.

ARMS and the heroic Queen I sing,
Rome could restore, lost power and honor bring
An Empire found, o'er many fertile lands
Extending far to Lybia's burning sands.
Its wide domain, from the vast midland shores,
O'er Ægypt's flowery plains where thundering roars,
'Mid fields that in perpetual sunshine smile,
Magnificent the cataract of Nile.
Noblest of Queens! her destiny sublime

Wise to surpass all powers of ancient time.
Amid the wilderness her glorious fate
To build a City and erect a State
In beauty, power and wealth that lustrous shone,
Brighter than e'er in Eastern lands was known.
Of genius more than mortal was the Queen,
The grandest edifices ever seen
In the lone desert's oasis could raise
And call the arts of peace to tell her praise.
Temples, grand palaces and colisee,
Nor yet forgetting direful war might be,
Fortresses, battlements and stately towers,
With all appliances 'gainst hostile powers,
Her care engaged. But, most the Queen's delight
The groves and Portico,—a goodly sight,—
And spacious streets, where free could move along
'Neath palms o'er-arching, countless throng on throng
Of people various. Not Syrians alone
That basked in sunshine of Zenobia's throne.
Their sons remotest nations freely sent,
The Greek, the Roman to Palmyra went ;
There found the Arts with Liberty combined,
A social State that sorely left behind
The proudest Roman and Athenian sage,
Each peaceful toil that could the wise engage
Zenobia's care, earth's Rulers all beside,

Ruder than their rude age, could ne'er abide
 The sweet restraints of peace, each warlike art
 Their sole employ, so fierce they played their part,
 Selfish, their end to gain,—ignoble end
 That bade the wisest monarchs basely spend
 The precious hours, striving rich hoard to seize
 Their lust of gold and Empire to appease.

II.

Two travellers disembark from a Mediterranean Trader near Damascus—Tullius Curtius Piso arrives at the House of Heraclius, a noble Palmyrene—Piso in the Gardens of Heraclius—Palmyra superior to Rome—Shameful apathy of the Romans after the defeat and captivity of Valerian—Cneius Piso detained by Sapor—Aurelian restores the fallen Empire—Prosperity of Palmyra.

HERE we part, great Roman, my steady view
 On traffic bent, ever hoping to renew
 With hoarded gold, thy walls, Jerusalem,
 Thy children mindful of thy sacred claim.
 Thou, noble Piso, to Zenobia's home
 In bright Palmyra. E'er the time should come
 Thou'd'st seek of staunch fidelity the stay,
 His friendship ne'er will Nepthali betray.

ZENOBIA.

Curtius Piso arrives at the House of Heraclius.

Welcome, my Curtius, to Palmyra's walls!
 Welcome for pleasure, or if duty calls;
 Our City's vast resources all thine own;
 Its power thy cares with victory will crown.
 Enjoy, meanwhile, the pleasant festive hours,
 So sweet beneath Palmyra's palm tree bowers;
 Let converse wise and varied entertain,
 With change, at times, to music's soothing strain.

Piso in the Gardens of Heraclius.

"The air is balm. Sweet zephyrs fan the brow.
 What contrast to the ever-burning glow
 Of Tiber's sun and foul malarious gale
 That turns the cheek of youth to deadly pale!
 A second Rome Palmyra! more than Rome
 In climate--people, fit to be the home
 Of wise Aurelian who to Rome restored
 Her glories lost, victory on victory poured,
 Nor yet avenged Valerian's disgrace,
 Triumphant still the barb'rous Persian race.
 King Sapor, Persia's Prince of tyrant brood
 Defiant scorns the best of Roman blood.
 Beyond the reach of worldly cares and ills,
 Now sleeps the good Valerian, so wills

Inexorable fate. Yet, O, disgrace !
O, burning shame to our degenerate race !
The tyrant, Sapor, still in bondage holds
Brave men whom fitful war so oft beholds
O'erthrown and hopeless lost, ignobly bound,
While no resource in conquering Rome is found.
Too hard that I, a Roman Senator,
By scheming here, almost by dishonor,
A countryman and brother seek to save
From Sapor's cruel grasp. 'Tis said he gave
Unto his son, the Prince Hormisdas named,
Our Cneius Piso, whom the victor claimed."

Heraclius, as clearly from his name,
By long descent, the blood of Rome could claim.
With Curtius Piso, at his palace home,
Discourse was held of dearly cherished Rome ;
His friend now telling 'neath the weakly sway
Of mild Valerian, glory passed away,
How, when arose Aurelian, was shown
New power, the legions won their lost renown,
Nor Goth nor German daring more to brave
Their arms, fallen Rome their destiny to save,
An Empire, once so great, now lost, outdone,
In glory to renew, once more its own
Each nation of the West, its pristine fame

ZENOBIÆ.

Restored ; the legions warring in the name
Of great Aurelian, nought could withstand
Nor stay their bravery in every land,
Rome now victorious round the midland tide,
The vanquished nations ruling far and wide.
Four days' travelling in the burning sand
Made doubly sweet the pleasures of this land ;
The prosperous nation and its city fair,
With commerce risen, may truthfully compare
With trading Carthage or all conquering Rome,
Finds here each art of peace its fitting home.
Where ends the desert and the fertile plain
Spreads wide its verdure, ere the town you gain,
For many a mile sweet villas grace the scene
And palaces of noble Palmyrene.
Nearer the lofty walls a dazzling sight
Now fills with awe, yet more affords delight.
Domes, stately towers and edifices grand
This chosen city of the new-born land
Proudly adorn, more than Imperial Rome
Designed to be the conquering Cæsar's home.
No sooner has the traveller passed the gate
Than glories new the tasteful mind await.
Long rows of gorgeous dwellings line the way.
All chiselled marble, sparkling in the ray
Of Asia's cloudless sun. Here strikes the view

Zenobia's palace home; vivid renew
 Rome's proudest glories—temples vast and rare.
 A Portico and Colisee appear
 Towering the skies to meet, in grandeur more
 And richest art, than yet on Tiber's shore
 The haughty Roman boasts, in wide extent
 Though glorying, on conquests new intent.

III.

Heraclius conducts Piso to the Portico and the Temple of the Sun—Was Zenobia a Jewess?—Her policy of liberty—The Power of Truth—Less toleration at Rome—Grecian art—Frequenters of the Portico—Sages and Sophists of Greece—An Epicurean—Piso's opinions—Liberty of thought and speech accorded by Zenobia—Jews and Christians persecuted at Rome—Merchants in the Portico—Relics of Niniveh, Thebes and Babylon—Paintings—Manuscripts—Gems of art—A Platonic Philosopher—Christianity—A Christian Sage.

AND now the hospitable Palmyrene
 His guest invites a grand and novel scene
 To view. Moves promptly from the gate
 Heraclius' chariot, in Patrician state.
 And now a novel, grand and brilliant sight
 The Roman greets, such as of Roman might
 Could well the pleasing memory recall,

ZENOBIÆ.

But grander still, of marble bright each wall
Palmyra's streets along, and crowd the ways
The sons of every clime ; 'neath the keen rays
Of Asia's sun each his rare garb displays
In the resplendent light that round him plays.
Extol the Romans—their augustan age,
Their edifices grand, as on the page
Of history their ancient glories show
Each wall, each street with poetry aglow.
Here all is new ; not less the prosperous reign
Portraying well of the Imperial twain,
Augustus Odenatus and his Queen ;
Whate'er in ancient art had ever been
Successful emulating, Grecian art
Than Roman more, plays here its noble part,
And brighter domes arise than e'er adorned
The proud Imperial City, vain that scorned
The new born state, ignobly sought its fall,
Or that of Rome it were the hopeless thrall,
Now comes in view, and 'tis a glorious sight.
Inspiring wonder now and now delight,
Palmyra's glory, masterpiece of art,
The Temple of the Sun. Here fills the heart
A sense of beauty deepening as you gaze.

Piso, enraptured, loudly speaks its praise,
The Queen extols and artists that could raise
An edifice so grand, grander than Rome
In all her pride could boast, its stately dome
Towering to Heaven, its marble columns grand
The skies appear to reach, so high they stand.
An inner colonnade and walls pure white
Still higher rise, the centre's wondrous height
Inspiring awe, yet admiration more
Commanding. Piso curious would explore
The unwonted scene, to Roman eye so new.
By his desire and closely more to view
This work of Grecian art within the walls
Of great Palmyra, Heraclius calls
His chariot may stay, while they delight
In contemplation of the gorgeous sight.
“Here do I see the Temple of the Sun?
And such a work by wise Zenobia done!
Plato's Philosophy she professes,
Moses honors as becomes a Jewess,
So rumour tells.” Thus the question presses
The inquiring Roman. “Great Israel's laws
Reveres Zenobia, and from Plato draws
Sublime philosophy; yet Syrian rites

Freely she admits, and lib'ral delights
Her faithful people, gathered from all climes,
Liberty, so new in these heathen times
In measure full according,—this her mind—
No laws of State the free born soul can bind ;
Nought 'gainst the power of Truth can e'er avail ;
For great is Truth, and, final, will prevail,
Of Juda's race, so deems the Queen, one day,
Will spring a teacher sacred Truth's bright ray
Widely will spread. Keener than two edged sword
Opposing powers 'twill crush, by heavenly word
Destined to conquer. All the barb'rous arts,
By monarchs planned, in vain assail the hearts
Of stubborn men. Truth scorns their futile aid,
Error defies, now mocks the wrecks they've made.'
Lauded, thus, Heraclius the wise Queen,
While Piso : “ Never yet, O Fate ! hath been
Such liberty at Rome. Vain we pretend
The Gods to shield, whilst they our State defend.”
“ That Temple of the Sun ! How it displays
The skill of Architecture ! boldly plays
A double part ! Nicely shows it as well
The Guebre worship, as by art can tell
The lore of Greece. Nought here is Palmyrene,
Indebted are we, more than Rome hath been,
To Grecian art, no less than lettered taste.

Our learned men, our Sages,—all that's best—
To Greece we owe, our ablest men of State,
Even our chief Minister, so wills it Fate.
Now, my Curtius, seek we another scene,
A half mile more, the Portice is seen.”
No end to wonders ! grandly here, once more,
Appears the skill of Greece in splendid store
Of ornament. In purest marble shines
The lengthened colonnade, while space combines
With curious workmanship a roof to spread
O'er countless throngs of many a tongue and race
That crowd Palmyra. Here is seen to pace
The Connoisseur on art's rare gems intent ;
On glowing pictures now his thoughts are bent ;
And now the sculptured marble claims his care ;
Whilst even diversions seek the time to share.
Gathers a group the mountebank around
His tricks fantastic and the merry sound
Of fortune telling tongue to laughter loud
Provoke, while presses round the idle crowd.
Not idle all. The merchant bent on gain
His wares displays, gathered with toil and pain,
In every clime. Here, too, is seen the Sage.
The manners of the place his thoughts engage,
Mankind his study, early taught to know
Of men the knowledge best that man can show.

Such lore to learn a fitting place is found
'Mid columns and entablature around
The beauteous Portico. Sculptured appear,
In all the excellence of art most rare,
On the high frieze the far famed martial deeds
And Statesman acts whence, in due time proceeds
A Nation's glory. Chief 'mong these are claimed
By Macedonia's heroe, justly named
"The Great." Thus cunningly gives Grecian art
To Greece's valor Greece's honored part.
Much that is excellent we doubtless, owe
To Grecian art. Not all that Greece can show
In art is found. Her lot in every age
The mind to guide; each venerable Sage
Excelled in wisdom; each surpassing each,
'Twas theirs the best Philosophy to teach.
How soared their Socrates above the crowd!
Denouncing, ever; fearlessly and loud,
Debasing superstition, Athens' ways
Reproving, knowledge rare of better days
Almost attained he. Plato, in his wake,
Marched steadfast on, and marvellously spake
Of Immortality—a life to be
For man more happy in eternity.
The Sages Greece could boast a grand array;
Specious Sophists, meanwhile, oft ruled the day.

Lo! here a crowd that listens to the tale
A son of Epicurus dares retail.
Not as his learned Master cautious taught.
His lessons wild and false, with venom fraught,
Debits the Disciple. A motley throng
Hangs on his lips, thoughtless, imbibing wrong.
Idlers they are and rakes, though Palmyrene
And nobly born. Effeminate they're seen,
Pale and languid, hoping, as well they may,
Philosophy to hear will suit their way
And justify their deeds;—this all they claim.
Hear how the Sophist argues, his sole aim
Fair Truth to cloud and in a wordy maze
The mind offuscate. Such vain talk the craze,
As you shall learn, of this man, Critias named,
The Athenian, for Sophistry far famed.
“Thus,” cried he, “did Nature’s secret wise unfold
Our Master Epicurus. This we hold:
If nothing once I was, nothing is there now;
This axiom clearly will my teaching show;
Plain—something is, it’s open to our view,
Beyond a doubt the world is, ’tis nothing new;
Therefore, has it always been—eternal—
Infinite. Say, my good friends, can you call
Two things infinite?—two infinities!
Absurd, you say; whence then Divinities—

The world's one or many mighty makers ?
Gone ! gone at my word, and we're partakers
Of liberty unknown to all beside,
To Greece and Rome unknown with all their pride
And all their Gods,—childish inventions all
Could only serve the minds of men to thrall.
Leave ye to Greece and Ægypt of the past
The silly superstition held them fast
As in a dungeon's gloom. Dawned has the light.
Rejoice ! with loud acclaim sound your delight.
Let's now dispose of immortality.
Souls immortal ! monstrous futility !
A soul what mortal 'mong you ever saw ?
The soul ne'er seen, now the conclusion draw.
The body to the sense apparent is,
Then it exists, you hold. Sure is not this
Conclusive ? The soul ne'er met your vision ;
Hence 'tis fairly argued with precision,
As you may judge who ne'er a soul have seen
The soul ideal is and ne'er hath been.
What ne'er hath been, what men can never see,
Immortal ! mortal well we're known to be ;
Immortal, too ? the fact has ne'er been shown
When Gods, if Gods, indeed there be, come down
From their Empyrean height and I receive
Sure word of life to be, then I believe."

“ Monstrous delusion ! atheism outright ! ”
Cries Piso, “ fit only the mind to blight,
The state and social order overthrow.
Were this rash fool at Rome we’d quickly show
’Twere better he should seek some other sphere
Than pious Rome, where men the Gods revere,
Wherein to flaunt his unbelief and learn
New wisdom ’neath the lash of Justice stern.”
Now would Heraclius his Queen defend.
“ For Roman State and views great pains you spend.
Philosophies, like legions in array,
You vainly fight. Not this Zenobia’s way.
’Gainst thought and speech no arms can e’er avail,
The destiny of wisdom to prevail.
All systems false before advancing light
Crumble and disappear, like sable night
At the approach of day. Thus deems the Queen.
In such like views her statesmanship is seen.
Hence her fixed policy to tolerate
Conflicting sects—those, even, that proudly prate
Like Critias, daring would subvert the state,
And mar, if that could be the course of Fate.
At Rome true wisdom you pretend maintain
By exercise of state power. What your gain ?
Rome’s history and learned writings tell
How persecuted sects have prospered well.

That superstition of the Jewish race
You thought to be of Rome the worst disgrace
You hoped to crush, and o'er the Empire wide
Dwell Israelites, exulting in the pride
Of wealth and power, by honest commerce won.
What Romans have so hard and cruel done
The Christian to kill, was done in vain.
The more you lashed, the more he dared maintain
His vantage ground and urged his rightful claim—
Urged in sweet liberty's most sacred name.
With fire and sword you willed his ranks to mow,
His destiny, the while, to spread and grow,
Your land to fill, ubiquitous become
And occupy the Palaces of Rome.
The Christian name, so famed, to quench in blood
You eager sought, and lo! the crimson flood
Of that dread Faith you wished the world were freed,
As time rolled on, became the fruitful seed.
“From this vain declaimer haste we away,
And, please, my Curtius, seek a scene more gay.”
Heraclius, as he spoke, now led his guest
To the vast mart where anxious crowding pressed
Varieties of men, curious arrayed
In costumes diverse, to the Roman new.

Here, clad in Tyrian dyes, now meets the view
A throng of merchants, their various wares
Displaying 'neath the columned dome, while shares
A trading Jew the allotted space, vast store
Of rare and costly things setting before
The public eye.—from Niniveh ransacked
And Thebes and Babylon,—all he had packed
With anxious care; extolling the strange hoard
Dug from the ruins he'd with toil explored.
Coins he produced, statues, old inscriptions,
Antique jewellery of all descriptions.
Near to the Jew, a cunning Greek displays
Some beauteous paintings, precious gems, they hold,
Of art Athenian,—Xeuxis, 'tis told,
The artists, and Apelles, are; well known,
Historic parchments witness bear, while shown,
In finest workmanship, a master's hand.
Such art can tasteful Palmyrenes withstand?
Rare manuscripts were temptingly set forth;
Most ancient some, others their priceless worth
From authors' fame derived, or writers' skill
In penmanship. Resist them if you will.
By art, still more, to brighten the gay scene,
Vases choice Etruscan here could be seen,
And Ægypt's curious skill. 'Mong these proud s'tare
Roman Demetrius owned. Fit to compare

His artist gems with best that could produce
Famed Ægypt's art,—all offered to the use
Of the rich Palmyrene, who eager sought,
Careless of cost, such wares and willing bought.
Hence not far a listening group we find
Attentive and sedate, of gravest mind.
Discourses here a Platonician sage,
Suited his words to men of every age:
“It must be so, Plato, Thou reasonest well;
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself and startles at destruction?
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
If there's a power above us,
(And that there is, all Nature cries aloud
Through all her works) good he is,
In goodness takes delight.”
Essentially good, baseness
Malignity no attribute Divine.
Like to the sun, doth ever glorious shine
The true and constant, all pervading love
Of Him who reigns, alone, supreme, above.

Strange contradiction surely it would be
 If 'twere the God of love's unjust decree
 That man should e'er essentially aspire
 To immortality, the fond desire
 Vainly implanted in his trusting breast,
 That only, in the end, he be distressed
 With dissappointed hopes and blighted mind,
Nothing to be—the lot of all mankind."
 Thus the Platonician. "Doctrine sublime!"
 Cries Piso, "None of us with fleeting time
 Shall end! Delightful thought by Gods inspired!
 With reason in accord, yet not acquired
 Its certainty. More proof than Plato gives
 Is yet to seek that man forever lives."
 "Hear we," Heraclius calls, a Christian sage.
 "The Christian Sect, so wide-spread in this age,*
 Bolder than Plato speaks. Its high renown
 The Empire fills, its Doctrines now well known,
 By many held, while men of firmest mind
 Peace with assurance, in its teachings find.
 Reason it disdains not: such e'er it claims
 As Nature's judgment, Reason's lofty aims
 Deity confirming, by word from Heaven,
 The certainty desired to man is given.
 Thus, Christians say, and ere we far proceed,

*A. D. 270.

A Priest we'll meet discoursing on his creed." This said, to Roman Piso it appeared
The Pórtico a temple was, where heard
Were all philosophies, and men of trade
With sage combined and artist, and thus made
A universal mart, in which the mind
And grosser senses both their pleasure find.
That Doctrine, deemed so holy, in this place,
Christians should zealous preach and fearless, face
A crowd promiscuous! Yet such well is known
Their zeal to be for what they deem is shown
The blessed Truth from Heaven, they oft avail
Of liberty,—that boon of states the stay,
So firmly guarded by Zenobia's sway,
The Palmyrenes to teach, and shed the light
That to their minds appears so glorious bright.
Heraclius and his noble Roman friend,
Anxious to learn, their footsteps promptly bend
The spot to gain, where midst a crowd is seen
The wise Sebastian, as in youth he'd been,
Still eloquent, questions lofty profound
Striving to elucidate, whilst, around,
Attentive stands a listening multitude,
Longing to know, in all its plenitude,
The grand Philosophy the Christian taught,
For life's uses all with choice wisdom fraught.

“ Well known to men philosophy’s high aim—
That man himself should know,—this all its claim,—
And knowing conquer. Vainly it aspired
The wisdom to hold Christians have acquired.
Learn we all not only ourselves to know
But govern too. This wondrous power we show
When rebel passion seeks to rule the mind,
And in the lessons of our Faith we find
The guidance sure can strong and certain still
The rising storm within, to better will
Each movement of the soul obedient,
When fierce desire and deadly evil bent
Allayed successful, peace the victor’s meed.
‘ Clearly we see—approve each better deed,
But choose not ; From the right allured away,
In error’s mazes lost, we sadly stray.’
So spake the best philosophy of old.
Rejoice that creeds more comforting are told.
Conjectures rare the ancient sages made,
But ne’er before their anxious pupils laid
Tenets firmly held ; never surely taught
Confident, unwavering, there was aught
The Universe throughout, could certain show
A self-existing cause all men should know.
Blind were they, nor could read the starry Heaven,
Earth’s wonders and its wealth to mortals given,

Creative wisdom see and sagely rise
 From Nature up to Nature's God,—all wise,
 Omnipotent, cause final, Infinite
 And self-existent, high, above all height
 Of Spirit Power and the vast world beside,
 By his own laws able to bind and guide.
 Nought certain could the greatest sages say,
 Opinions only, each in his own way,
 They doubting held, nor e'er could soaring rise
 Above the listening throng that called them wise.
 Not less the wisdom of that school where read
 Was Nature's book, their knowledge widely spread,
 As told by Rome's great consul, learned and sage,
 From Greece who science won, gracing his age.

*"Nulla gens tam fera cujus mentem non
 Imbuerit Deorum opinio."*

"The barb'rous people never yet was known
 Persuasion of Divinity hath never shown."
 Systems both past and present all excels
 The Christian Faith. Its teaching doubt expels,
 Shews forth the final cause—Divinity,—
 And marks his attribute infinity.

"In her sublime research Philosophy
 May measure out the ocean deep,
 May count the stars or the sun's rays ;
 But, God! for Thee there is no weight

“Nor measure. Reason’s brightest spark,
 Though kindled by thy ray, in vain would try
 To search thy counsels, infinite and dark,
 And thought is lost e’er thought can soar so high,
 Even like past moments in eternity.”

“The Infinite to fathom!—vain the thought.
 Meanwhile, before the Christian mind is brought
 The Deity in majesty sublime,
 Bound not by narrowing ties of space or time.
 His Power creative, Providential care,
 Wisdom and love we confident revere.”

Now ceased the sage, still listening stood the throng.
 Then Piso: “Marvel not I, hearing, long
 More still this new Philosophy to know
 O! if at Rome ’twere known, no more we’d throw
 Its path around, impediments that shame
 Our City fair,—that blight our Roman fame.
 Peace is there now, indeed; long may it last!
 Persecution once and forever past.
 Yet, dear Heraclius, is there cause to fear
 In peaceful Rome new terrors may appear.
 Few hostile words uttered in Truth’s despite
 The fierce Aurelian strangely might excite,
 Unnatural war once more destructive rage,
 And popular hate ’gainst Christians engage.
 O! May such evil days the Gods of Rome
 Avert! give peace to every Roman home!”

IV.

Curtius Piso with Heraclius in the suburbs of Palmyra—Zenobia returns from a progress through her States—Her success and popularity Celebration in honor of Zenobia's return—Games—Wild beasts—Gladiators—Zenobia's reception at the Colisee—The sons of Zenobia in Imperial state—A political discussion—The games discussed—Piso invited to Zenobia's Court—Piso lays before the Queen the purpose of his journey to Palmyra—The Policy of Aurelian stated—Discussion thereon.

Anxious now our friends the sweet summer air
 To breathe, to cool suburban shades repair.
 Here, at each step, new beauties meet their sight,
 The country all around, could well delight
 The view, rich grounds spread on every side,
 Flowers, aromatic plants diffusing wide
 Their freshening perfume, the soft air serene
 Pleasure imparting, mid the varied scene.
 When, lo! vast clouds are seen to rise and roll
 O'er the enamelled plain; now hurrying stroll
 Towards the City's highways crowds on crowds
 Of eager citizens, the dusty clouds

Swelling apace, darkening the azure sky ;
Now loud resounds and far the loyal cry,
As hails the joyous multitude their Queen,
A cortege brilliant near at hand is seen,
Amid the shining throng Zenobia,
Home, once, more to her beloved Palmyra.
Far o'er the Empire of the Eastern land
Had been her progress, on cares that demand
The Provinces and realms that to her sway
Lay subject, wisely bent ; in her bright day
The great East proud Rome striving to outshine ;
A noble destiny !—arms that combine
With statesmanship the glory to create
Of nations, won to her cause. Envied state !
Her Kingdom destined each realm to excel
In time that powerful rose and hopeless fell.
Though wide and great, Rome's Empire of the East
In all its pride, its palmiest days and best,
In history's page no parallel could claim ;
Twofold pride !—arms and art gracing the name,
Sounding, through long time, Zenobia's renown,
Wisest of Queens that ever wore a crown.
Now the auspicious event to celebrate
Prepare the Palmyrenes, as well their state
Becomes, with fights of savage beasts, delight

The Asiatic mind affords, sad sight
To cultured men. The streets already crowd
Caged lions, fiercest tigers raging loud,
Eager for battle. Elephants the throng
Augment, with rage unwonted, seek the fray,
While here a huge Rhinoceros blocks the way.
In costumes gay haste citizens along,
Can scarcely move amid the ardent throng
Heraclius' chariot, vain to urge the steeds.
"Scipio, beware, else this moment bleeds
My best Arabian by the cruel jaws
Of that Numidian stretching out his paws
Forth of his cage bars, far two wide apart."
Suddenly surprised, prompt the chargers start,
With speed accustomed clear the dangerous ground,
Their Master's only fear, lest crowding round
The anxious multitude should, unawares,
Receive mishap, as hastening it repairs,
Heedless of danger, to the scene of fight.
Slowly, then, he moves, charging to press light
On the immense and ever gathering throng
Towards the Colisee that hastes along.
At length the amphitheatre is gained,
Heraclius, Portia, Piso have obtained
A place near to the spot the officials retain
For Queen Zenobia and her royal train.

The eager joyous crowd now swells apace,
Its wide extent throughout, filling the space,—
A gorgeous sight, to the admiring view
That could the spectacles of Rome renew,
Presenting. Not even Piso could withhold
From the grand scene 'twas given him to behold,
His admiration. Well it called to mind
The shows of Rome. Here richly were combined
The grandest costumes of the Eastern race,
Whate'er the brilliant colisee could grace,
And combatants anticipating fight,
Such as to the fiercest Roman gave delight,
When conquering Cæsars came to view the scene,
And gladiators, there, with beasts were seen,
Panting for battle,—those the imperial crown
Saluting, ere in gory floods thrown down,
A wild and savage pleasure to bestow ;
These growling, roaring, ere in death laid low.
Press on the crowds, resounds a martial strain.
The games forgot, no eye can now refrain
Or tire of gazing. Zenobia is seen.
With vivats loud the people hail their Queen.
Her Councillors, so wise, they warmly greet.
The statesman sage, Longinus, as is meet,
They honor most. Zabdas of high renown
In warlike fields, with honors next they crown.

To Zabdas for Ægypt won praise they deem
Is due ; his the qualities that beseem
A heroe fated to extend the fame,
Like a halo bright, encircling the name
Of the great Queen, whose rule o'er Eastern climes
A pattern e'er will be to future times.
The games proceed. Now in fell war engage
Two gladiators. Fierce the combat's rage.
With fatal wounds, at length, untimely spent,
Both champions to the blood-stained ground are bent.
Once more the clarion ! It loudly sounds
A royal flourish. A joyous cry astounds
Our Roman Piso, drowns the trumpet's bray,
Whilst, proudly, in Imperial array,
Appear Zenobia's Sons, and louder still
Resounds the popular voice. " Is this the will
Of wise Zenobia ? What means the Queen ?
Know not the Palmyrenes how such a scene
Will move Aurelian, war, in his mind
Already brooding ? Sad that he should find
New cause for strife. Flushed with successful arms,
Goths and Germans won, meets he new alarms
Here in these Eastern climes he deemed his own,
Zenobia his vassal. This well known
His thought to be. The Imperial robe he claims
Exclusive. Yet honors he the great aims

Of Queen Zenobia. Her's to rule the State
Could she but think it was her destined fate
Only in name high suzerain to own
Imperial Rome. Else must ever frown
The stern restorer of the Roman State,
Though not, indeed, of yet far distant date
The aid of Odenatus and the Queen,
When weak Valerian fell and o'er the East
King Sapor terror spread, by his behest,
Save for the Palmyrenes, our Empire lost,
'Neath Persia borne to the dust, Rome's great host
Subdued, our noble Emperor struck down,
Stripped of the purple and Imperial crown.
Such glorious service Romans highly prized.
Ne'er had Aurelian his thought disguised
Zenobia should reign as Eastern Queen,
High state assume, but ne'er be madly seen
To rival Rome and equal Empire claim,
Content to wear the crown and bear the name
Of Royalty,—her place vicarious state
In harmony with Rome. Such was her fate
Aurelian deemed, by rare success made bold
An undivided Empire he should hold."
Once more Heraclius would the Queen defend
"Remember, Piso, need was to contend
With Persia's King. Valerian, sought the aid

Of Odenatus and Persia was made
Timely to yield. The Senate gave decree
Associate in Empire both should be,
Zenobia and her Lord, like power should share,
The power of Rome, the Imperial purple wear
And be *august*, like conquering Cæsar styled.
Of such honors were Zenobia beguiled,
The Roman state would ever bear the shame
Of broken trust and stigmatize her name.”
“Nor would Zenobia bear so great a slight.
Strong in her people’s love, she’d dare to fight,”
So Portia spoke. The loyalty she claimed
For Palmyrenes and warlike Zabdas, famed
In many a gory field, brave Piso owned ;
But grieved him much the thought of war, though crowned
With victory, disastrous, bearing fate
Most baleful to the East, the Roman state
That would in like way, to its centre shake,
Its evils all each warring Power partake.
In early youth Aurelian he had known ;
Who knows but now, so powerful, he would own
The friendship of the Pisos, they of blood
Patrician ; he, son of a peasant good,
Fought in the ranks, much of his training owed
To noble Curtins, while genius he showed
For warlike arts ; from step to step then rose

To high command. In utmost need, Rome chose
That Emperor he should be, and guide her fate
Throughout the dangers of the troubled state.

With fierce Aurelian Piso may prevail
Dread war avert if friendship can avail.

While thus converse the friends, a deadly fight
The crowd attracts. Behold they with delight
A huge elephant struggling gainst two foes ;
One with his trunk seizing, he proudly shows
A victory is won ; it cannot be.

As to the ground he dashes rapidly
The wild Tiger, his second foe beside,
Thrusts the Rhinoceros into his side
His ugly horn. Now pierced and bleeding dies
The elephant, dead crushing, as he lies,
Both foes at once, with life the battle won,
Three victims by one cruel death undone.

“ O ! savage games ! from Rome our heritage
Fit only for a rude and barb'rous age.”

“ Not so, Portia,” Heraclius replies,

“ Behoves it not, my child, rashly to despise
These grand displays, of warlike men and free
The best amusements. These games our people see,
To arts of war and battle are inured ;
With blood familiar, bravery's assured.”

“ I like them not ;” says Piso, “ cruelty

They needless foster. Nought can justify
Such scenes. To them undoubtedly we owe
So many ruthless Emperors, the show
Demoralizing men, hardening the heart,
Those most nobly born rendering for war's art
Unfit, and arts alike of peaceful times ;
Romans, thus trained, throughout all conquered climes,
For themselves and legions win the foul name
Of cruelty, blasting their fairest fame,
Nations repelling, 'gainst the Roman yoke
So wise, besides, the gentlest must provoke.
In what have sinned the beasts, tortured and torn
In our amphitheatres, and brave men born
Of Roman blood, fit for their native land
In danger's hour to fight, do battle grand,
Of adverse war roll back the angry tide,
Our legions brave to glorious victory guide.
The Christian Sect whose fame for wisdom grows,
These games to view its members ne'er allows."
Heraclius no cruelty could see
In beast 'gainst beast engaged, their fate to be
Torn by each other in the forest wild.
"In either way, Portia, my dearest child,
Their destiny gored by their mutual rage
To perish. That Gladiators should engage
In deadly fray--what matters it--their life,

Worthless and low, ends in the arena's strife,
Somewhat ennobled is, and this our gain,—
These combatants our people entertain
With martial sights—our pride—who oft engage
'In war's dread sport and needful war must wage."
"I'm weary of this tiresome, savage play.
Now haste we from the blood stained scene away.
Could I an interview with the great Queen
Obtain, well, 'twould repay for all I've seen.
"So my Curtius, fain would you converse hold
With wise Zenobia. When you behold
Her near, and listen to her winning words,
Than all you've heard, her presence more affords
Delighted you will say. She knows you're here.
Her gracious message quickly will appear.
Now to our home, Ere well we've passed the gates,
The Royal bidding, you will find awaits."
Next day, in state appropriate to guide
The noble Roman to Zenobia's side,
Appeared a faithful herald of the Queen.
Piso, with pleasure meets a change of scene ;
The games fought out, no wild tumultuous crowd
Confusion spreads, no spectacle to cloud
The view, of savage beasts panting for fight.

Nought now remains save the calm pleasing sight
Of peaceful citizens wending their way
Through streets magnificent, 'mid the display
Of gorgeous merchandise,—the wealth and pride
Of grand Palmyra in her prosp'rous tide.
The Palace reached, to the bright presence hall,
An officer the Roman guides, and calls,
In solemn tones the noble Piso's name.
The Queen with Lucia, her daughter, came
Some steps to meet the Senator of Rome,
Thus honoring as if the guest were come
On Embassy Imperial, words to speak,
Wise and grave words, the weal of states that seek.
Piso the Queen salutes in Eastern style.
Zenobia, then, with the graceful smile,
So well befits her: "One of your high name
I greet with pleasure. Not unknown to fame
The rank and honors of the Pisan race.
Whatever friends have said, now face to face,
I fully recognize. Through Portia known
And wise Heraclius, welcome best is shown.
Your lips unseal; with freedom speak your thought."
Thus by the Queen so graciously besought,
Piso began: "Anxious one of our line
From prison foul to save, the midland brine
I've fearless crossed, hoping, O, Queen, to find

Some timely aid by which I could unbind
The fetters of a brother well beloved,
To prison doomed, when cruel Sapor proved
O'er Rome victorious, and the Eastern power
Disaster met in the sad baleful hour
Of Rome's defeat, when Palmyrenes their hand
Outstretched and bravely saved this glorious land.
A dweller in Palmyra, now, my trust
The wished for aid to find. But if I must
On private means rely, a man I've found
In Nephthali, the Jew, the mind will sound
Of Persia's tyrant, and mayhap contrive
From bondage base to rescue if still live
The prisoner." "Vain to negotiate
With Sapor;" says the Queen, "the captive's fate
'Twould only hasten. Brave Cneius to save,
Your noble brother, my best pains you'd have
If hope there were, I, striving could prevail.
Save craft and stratagem nought can avail.
Your judgment, therefore, Piso, good and wise,
Some secret scheme you cunningly devise."
"Most cordial do I thank you, noble Queen.
Emboldened by your words, will so demean
Himself my faithful friend, he cannot fail
To be successful and through friends prevail
The cause so near my heart, in time to gain

And captive Piso's liberty obtain.
"That Valerian should undergo defeat
The fate of arms ; that Sapor should so treat
His captives, foul disgrace must ever be
To the proud Roman. Persia's tyranny
By Odenatus and myself alone
Was timely stayed, else was with Rome outdone
This Empire of the East. By warlike arts
Dread blows we gave from which the tyrant smarted.
His laurels, dearly won, plucked from his brow,
Taught him by better skill in war to know
There still on earth remained a conquering power
That warring Persia, in her palmiest hour,
Could meet in arms, roll back the raging tide
Of Sapor's host, humbling the tyrant's pride.
Not fitting, surely, that to this small state,
In embryo, then, Rome should leave the fate
Of Empire. War yet may she undertake
The captives to avenge. Her lofty name
It well becomes. The high and widespread fame
Of Piso's house a Persian war may raise.
Were this the intent of Rome, 'twould not amaze
These Eastern climes. Rumors we often hear
Of martial purpose, so it would appear
Aurelian, tired of victory in Europe,
To Asia turns, cherishing the fond hope

Persia to humble, nobly to restore
Rome's fallen prestige on the grand Eastern shore."
"Of Piso's house Aurelian is the friend ;
Yet would it ill become me to pretend
His purposes to know, well understood
His policy, meanwhile. For Roman good
He deems the Empire should united be,
As in the days of Rome's prosperity.
One rule with Rome, from grand Euphrates tide
To the vast midland sea, where straits divide
The continents, o'er all the nations round.
Thus Antoninus saw the Empire bound.
The tie of unity could strength impart
That proved superior to each hostile art.
The glory of the Antonines 'twas held,
When Rome their sway invincible beheld,
One State there was, and one Imperial head
To rule the nations o'er the Empire spread.
Such O, Queen, is stern Aurelian's mind ;
No mere idea. Strongest proof we find
Of purpose fixed in the fierce wars he waged
'Gainst Gauls and Germans when rebellion raged.'
" Plain your speech, and fitting for a Roman.
Nothing new that possibly our foeman
Aurelian may become. To us well known,
The western world unsatisfied to own,

He fain would grasp these smiling Eastern climes.
Rumours floating around these recent times,
Have led me to surmise what you've declared
His purposes to be, though nothing feared,
Meanwhile, we'd have him clearly understand
What may betide him in this Eastern land,
If setting treaties, compacts—all—at nought,
And service to the Roman State, he sought,
Our Kingdom to usurp, our rights invade
Rights that Imperial decrees have made
And solemn acts of the Roman senate.
'Tis not forgot that when the Empire's fate
Trembled in the scales, and Rome's glorious name
By Persia was eclipsed, we timely came
The State to save, and for this honor won,
Associate power from good Valerian's son
Held I with Odenatus, by decree
Appointed of the Senate we should be
Henceforth AUGUST, the Roman purple wear
And rule Imperial with the Cæsars share.
But yesterday, Piso himself hath seen
How 'twas shewn popular has ever been
This gratitude, wisely by Rôme bestowed.
As you may judge, 'twas only right and meet
The Palmyrenes my sons should loyal greet
When, at the games, in purple garb arrayed

Our Royal State they fearlessly displayed.
Not rashly this, or without thought, was done,
Our purpose that the honor, dearly won
By warlike toil, by war if came the need,
Maintained should be and boldest martial deed.
Lucia now, mild her words and persuasive,
Craving the Queen her boldness would forgive :
“ The rash tidings heed not that rumour bears.
Ambitions is Aurelian, yet he shares
Our noblest sentiments. His Royal care
The Empire to extend, whilst he would spare
The pain that you forego your regal state.
His Government he would consolidate,
And better far, wisely he sought your power
His purpose to sustain, than war should lower,
His states throughout, and devastation spread,
With horrors dire of strife and troubling dread.
Honors he'll not grudge, more than in the day
When Odenatus wore the proud array
Of power Imperial,—his the well won meed
Of victory for Rome. If more were need,
The two-fold Empire would your sword command
And feats of Eastern arms once more demand
Imperial recompense, your destiny
AUGUSTA still ;—ordained your reign to be
These realms throughout, jointly with Roman sway,

The same your lot as in Valerian's day.
Our noble Piso may Aurelian guide
Wise policy advise and turn aside
The shock of war. O ! that on either hand
Views moderate prevail ! Nought could withstand
The lofty wisdom that for peace would plead,
Our state preserve in time of utmost need.”
Gracious the Queen on her loved daughter smiles
Complacent. Piso, then : “To warlike toils
I'm disinclined ; not more for sake of Rome
Than well beloved Palmyra. Here a home
I've found, and joyed to meet kind, faithful friends,—
Whate'er to my success and pleasure tends.
My care 'twill be such blessings to repay
Too blest, indeed, if I can turn away
From martial purpose him who's bent on war,
The stern Aurelian. Efforts all may mar
Of royal pomp the popular display
So recent seen, that show may bar the way
To peaceful treating. What if hence believes
Aurelian, willing, Zenobia receives
Imperial homage, truly hard I'll find
The task by any words to change his mind.”
“To Roman eyes offensive may appear
The honor done my sons. Yet if they wear
Imperial purple, doubtless 'tis my right.

Prejudice aside view in its true light
The State I hold. Was't not by the decree
Of Emperor and Senate, I should be
AUGUSTA styled ? By Roman law the name
I therefore hold. Blame not my hard won claim
The Palmyrenes so gladly joyously hailed,
So well to them it's known I've never failed
Its honor to sustain, and worthy bear
The State weight it entails of thought and care."
Lucia, for peace sake, would the Queen implore
The purple to forego, in prosp'rous store
Rejoice, and ever be content to reign
The Ally of Rome and, powerful thus retain
Her State and Throne ; this a relation owned
In every age since Rome was conquest crowned.
" Wisely spoken, Princess ; Piso that view
Commends, the love of peace sharing with you.
Were this Zenobia's mind, less hard would be
My task of love. Should once this guarantee
Be surely given that here 'twere only sought
An ancient custom to revive, inwrought
In Roman law, 'twould be the Imperial care
The case to weigh, the people glad to spare.
Thus gained would be the Prince whom call the Fates
To unify, once more, the Roman States.
Great my delight were e'er the fortune mine
That I to the Queen Aurelian incline."

V.

Zenobia at her rural Palace—Description—Games—The Princess Lucia, Portia and the Queen herself contend—Also Zabdas, the Queen's sons, her cousin Anthony and others—How Odenatus came to be assassinated—Anthony murders a slave, in the Queen's presence—Slavery discussed—The chase—Hunting the wild boar—A Tiger—The Queen in danger—Embassy from Aurelian.

Wearied with journeying and many cares
 To her suburban Palace now repairs
 Zenobia. Nor to this sylvan scene
 Does she alone proceed. Around the Queen
 Are noble Palmyrenes. 'Mong these appear
 The wise Longinus, Zabdas, Lucia, near
 The Royal Dame. By special bidding pressed,
 Came good Heraclius and his Roman guest,
 His daughter, Portia and a noble train
 Of faithful friends, whilst o'er the flowery plain,
 Their sovereign to attend, her statesmen sage
 Were seen to ride, each anxious to engage
 Though grave men all, in rural sports that please
 The most, when time allows the mind due ease

From statesmen's cares, as oft they seek with grace
The merry throng or follow in the chase.
A lovely spot that rural home, sweet scenes
On every side. A shady bower here screens
From Asia's fervid sun, there wide spread lawns
Flower enamelled meet the rapt view as dawns
The morning light. For many a long mile
Towards the town, in rarest beauty smile
Woodland and field. A tangled forest hides
The Syrian desert. Here secure abides
The Lion king of beasts. The Tiger shares
With Panthers wild the jungle where their lairs
Abound the most. The Elephant finds place
Where loftiest trees engross the forest space.
And for the eager sportsman's chief delight,
The shaggy wild boar often greets the sight.
In happier days, ere widowed was the Queen,
This forest grand full many a cheering scene
Had witnessed. Boldest huntsmen in the chase
Engaged of noblest game. Lions to face
The sport of some. Tigers untamed and fierce
Sought others with sharp javelins to pierce.
To many wild boars were the chosen game,
All burning for victorious huntsmen's fame.
'Twas thus while hotly raged the Royal chase,
The base Mœonius meanly, in the place

Of Odenatus, struck the kingly game,
And o'er his monarch boldly dared to claim
The honors of the hunt, but met rebuke,
Unworthy deemed another's prize that took.
Spiteful as mean, revenge the traitor sought.
One day, in hunting, unawares, was brought
The unheeding King within the villain's glance.
Mæonius, cruel, pierced him with his lance.
'Twas now proposed that all their skill should prove
In throwing of the lance. At once they move
Towards the lawn. Portia to Piso said :
"True to my word, our skill shall be displayed.
How Palmyrenes the javelin can wield
And strike with steadiest aim the target shield,
Our Roman friend with pleasure will behold.
Though not in strength excelling will make bold
The youthful Cæsars first their skill to try."
Prompt, Hermianus makes his javelin fly.
But, feebly thrown, short of the mark it falls.
Timotheus, next, for the sharp weapon calls.
A slave the lance presents. 'Tis quickly thrown,
Yet reaches not the shield. Defeat must own
The baffled Prince. Then Marcus throws a lance.
By the shield staff, well aimed, 'twas seen to glance.
Come Nobles now of the Patrician train
Striving with matchless skill the shield to gain.

Their weapons in its centre struck. His place
The powerful Zabdas left and seized with grace
From the attendant slave a ready lance.
The appointed central mark to strike his chance,
But yet, too strongly thrown, to pass the shield
The weapon failed,—fell shivered to the field.
At the proud game will now Zenobia play.
New pleasure 'twas to watch the graceful way
Her lance she poised ; then with unerring aim
The target reached, yet could not rightful claim
Complete success. Her lance, indeed, had struck
The central aperture, but hopeless stuck
In passing through ; force failing, downward bent,
In the green sod its impetus was spent.
Let noble Portia now the skill display
Of Syria's women—art, as all men say,
Unrivalled. Portia graceful wings the dart.
Straight and sure it speeds,—instant gains the heart
Of the great shield, and passing even on
At distance to the ground is level thrown.
A perfect feat ! Applause, cordial and loud,
Spontaneous bursts from the surrounding crowd.
“ I know it,” said the Queen, “ there's not the art
Portia excels not in. Whate'er her part,
Superior she proves. Well in music skilled,
The harp her plaything, while her mind riched filled

With philosophic lore, she's fit to meet
Longinus, or the wisest at the feet
Of Moses or of Plato * wisdom drank.
With her alone my own Lucia claims rank.
Now to the play, my child ; you cannot boast
The firm hand of Portia. Let not be lost,
Meanwhile, the power of art." Shakes in her hand
The well poised lance. Prompt, at the Queen's command,
It speeds, the central opening haply gains,
But, there, not strongly thrown, its head remains.
"My Princess," Zabdas, quickly rising, cried,
"A Roman chose that lance, as well I spied.
Let me select another, and, once more
Your fortune try. A victory you'll score,
I deem, when trial fair your skill is given."
"Now that our heroe bravely has arisen
My arm to nerve, glad to renew my fame
I'll strive. But, first, let Zabdas play the game.
The lesson he can set I sorely need.
His art undoubted, triumph sure his meed."
Thus Lucia. The roused warrior sought the feat,
Obedient to the call, nor feared defeat.
His energy awake, he threw the lance.
Through the shield's open mark 'twas seen to glance,
'Yond Portia's sped and, level, struck the ground.

*The Queen's two favorite sages.

Admired they all who there were gathered round.
Her courage wakened, Lucia now essays.
New strength with skill and firmness she displays.
Her lance, by Zabdas given, unerring thrown,
Hath Portia's reached, straight through the centre flown,
"Our fortunes, Portia, still the same abide ;
United still, my place is by your side."
"Would not our cousin in the sport engage ?
What says Antonius ?" The play war he'll wage,
Promptly from his attendant slave receives
A lance of proof. Now fondly he believes
That victory unwonted he'll achieve,
By skill unusual his lost fame retrieve.
The huge ungainly man his weapon throws ;
But awkwardly ; the grassy sod it strews
With fragments, wide of the mark. There a slave,
Observant, indication heedless gave
Of his contempt by laughing at the feat,
Intended to be great, but proved defeat.
In height of rage Antonius seized a dart
And plunged it in the Æthiopian's heart.
The games by royal command were ended.
"Were not by our laws such deeds defended,
Dearly should Antonius this outrage rue,
To us insulting, no less than to you
Our chosen friends. Our wise Longinus says,

Though law forbids not, plainly are such ways
Inhuman,—'gainst the eternal law that binds
Our nature,—law that own the wisest minds.”
Thus spoke Zenobia. Piso would reply :
“ Wisely speaks the Queen. Meanwhile, to rely
On Nature's voice were vain. The slave at Rome
A chattel is. Dominion in our home
We claim. Obedience prompt our slaves must pay.
Yet frequent they rebel. A slave to slay
We, therefore, deem no crime. Hundreds have bled
Their master to avenge, and free from dread
Of new rebellion. But, while such our code
'Twas crime to violate this Queen's abode.”
“ O, sad,” said Lucia, “ slaves there should be
On this fair earth ! Are not all men born free ? ”
“ This I grant you. But long as war we wage,
There will be captives, who must needs engage
In slavery. For them no better fate
Nor Gods above nor mortal men create.”
So far Heraclius the need must own
That slaves should be. “ But this poor plea alone
The system stays not. Big with evil fraught,
Like a dark cloud, it lowers. If ever aught
The fall of mighty Rome precipitate
And hurry on the awful doom of fate,
'Tis slavery. Even now in dastard fear

Each master lives. The slave to spare
He dreads, for doubtful safety cruel grows,
And 'mid Patrician power and grandeur shows
The lurking coward. Oft a servile war
Has raged, and with its horrors dimmed the star
Of Roman destiny. O, that our State
The direful system promptly could abate !
From Rome's bright atmosphere forever blot
Its greatest danger,—slavery's plague spot."
"Will come the time," the Princess Lucia says,
"When with improving manners, better ways
Enlightened men pursuing, its lost hold
The system will deplore. Ours to behold
The great day its end will see. The clear ray
Already darts its beams, will sweep away
The gathered mists that centuries have thrown
O'er erring men. Then Liberty her throne
Will mount, security and peace prevail,
Slavery outdone, its power of no avail."
"From that mysterious force on which relies
Our Lucia, if aught, beneath the skies
A change can bring, will come the order new.
The glad world in better light will view
The social plague, and liberate the state,
Whilst nobly raising from his cruel fate
The crushed and bleeding slave. My Lucia, say,

Is not the Christian Faith this surer way
Mankind will teach ?" "Tis thus I ever deem
Its destiny will be. Already seem
Powerful to work its influences grand.
In vain the persecutor's mighty hand
Is raised in wrath. Nought 'gainst it can avail.
Like Truth itself it's destined to prevail."
Such power the noble Portia fails to see.
"If so in Christianity there be
The latent strength you claim, what has it done ?
What good achieved ? what wide spread conquests won,
Now that two centuries and a half and more,
We're often told of its mysterious lore ?"
"Judge not," says Lucia," by what appears.
In men's opinions 'tis the work of years
Successful revolution to achieve
And when achieved, we cannot yet believe
The change is wrought, because it is unseen.
Hence comes, the cruelty so long has been
In honor held and necessary deemed,
In secret thought condemned, although esteemed
In outward act a safeguard of the state,
Lost in opinion, soon must meet its fate.
Christians, you'll own, abound in every place ;
Their thoughts to share no longer is disgrace.
The voice of nature aiding, will prevail

Feelings more sound, sure destined to avail
"Gainst cruel deeds and powerful sweep away
Their baleful cause with slavery's dread sway,
(No hope for Rome long as it lives and reigns)
The conquest won without apparent pains."

"So Lucia may it be! yet to believe
Is hard. Your panacea will achieve
A victory so great I yet must deem
Incredible. To most men it will seem
Alike impossible that in the mind
Ideas lurking, unseen, ways will find
Grandly to renew our dire social state
Changing what well are named decrees of Fate."

Next day the Queen and train by early dawn,
Passing beyond the spacious flowery lawn,
The forest seek. There far and wide extend
Both rock and woodland; only there its end
Where, in the distance, lies the burning sand,
The sterile desert of the Syrian land
Dismal and pathless, travellers' fear,
Where many perish ere way-farers near
The walls of Antioch, or stately towers
Of Ecbatana, seat of Persian Powers.

Not long till game is seen. Swift from his lair
Startled flies a wild boar, his chances fair
Of safety. On the Royal huntsmen speed,

Eager with stroke of spear to win the meed
Of victory, when from a rocky height,
In act to spring, now, unawares, in sight
Appears a famished Tiger. On the Queen,
Too near the beast, glaring and fierce are seen
To dart his fiery orbs. A moment more,
He springs ;—a shaft, well sped, the monster tore.
In 'mid air struck, ere he could reach his prey,
Down came the Tiger, bleeding as he lay
At the Arabian's feet. The gentle steed
In terror plunged. Avails to check his speed
Zenobia's skillful hand. A ready dart
From Zabdas' arm now pierced the Tiger's heart.
Joyful the Queen and her Patrician train,
Tired with the chase, the rural Palace gain
When hark ! the trumpet's sound ! with breathless speed
A Roman herald comes on foaming steed ;
His message :—“ At the outer Palace gate
Two Senators from Rome direct, await
The Royal will, an audience request
In order to announce the high behest
Of their Imperial Lord.” “ When here we seek
Repose, 'tis not our wont anxious to speak
On matters of the State. For Cæsar's sake
We'll custom waive, meanwhile, and counsel take
With Rome's Ambassadors. Bid them approach,

In presence of our Council faithful broach
 The subject of their Embassy. We'll hear
 And fairly to whatever shall appear
 Aurelian's mind, our best attention give,
 Anxious with Rome on terms of peace to live."
 Spoke thus the Queen. Their message to unfold
 The Senators proceed. "Tis often told
 A warlike expedition has in view
 Our Emperor, rumour in this speaks true
 That to the East 'twill turn. Yet more we say;
 And this without offence you'll hear, we pray.
 Palmyra, O, Queen! Not Persia its aim,
 Its purpose to make good the Roman claim
 To long lost tribute, lands long torn away
 From the Imperial Crown. All this we say
 Aurelian pretends." To this speech the Queen,
 With kindling eye and animated mien :
 "Honors me this candour. Say, what demands
 Aurelian,—what terms of peace commands."
 In reply Petronius : "The Ægyptian land
 For many years was wont, with liberal hand
 Into Rome's treasury loyal to pour
 Of wealth untold its never ceasing store.
 To Palmyra now the rich tribute flows.
 The whole East the like altered record shows.
 Bythinia and Syria, fallen away,

Babylonia that owned the Roman sway,
And far extending Jesireh are lost,
Whilst on the Mediterranean coast
And inland, richest Cities,—such are known
As Orfah, Mosul, Bagdad, alien grown,
Their tribute willing to Palmyra pay,
This treasure all from Romans torn away.
That o'er this famous City now should reign
Zenobia, will ne'er be heard complain
Our Emperor. It moves his generous mind
Rome's great and ancient Eastern realms to find
Snatched from the West, a separate Empire grown;
The state exalted of the Imperial crown
Its Rulers claiming. Once, indeed, were gained
Such honors, when, at Rome, so feebly reigned
The good Valerian. Like rewards, when won,
Accorded were for service nobly done.
'Twas never meant the Empire should be riven,
Its better, richer half to Syria given.
None more than great Aurelian justly own
The genius and virtue Zenobia crown.
To parent Rome this debt, he well conceives,
Is due, the Empire, he sincere believes,
Its pristine power and glory should regain,
The East possess, as in the vigorous reign
Of Antoninus. Firm holds to this view

Aurelian, the torn Empire he renew.”
“The Imperial thought you’ve spoken, frank and true,
So far, Petronius, I honor you.
In just return, I with like plainness say :
No gift but an inheritance my sway.
By Odenatus and myself ’twas won ;
And shall not, Heaven my help, be now undone
By Roman power. Ægypt, the midland coast,
Syria should I yield, my Empire’s lost ;
Its provinces to Rome all given away,
And at our cost, high sworn the Roman sway.
Rome’s glory seeks Aurelian ? This he boasts
His great ambition. Mine, like toil that costs,
My Empire to preserve, and ever reign
A Queen. Tell him, Zenobia ne’er will claim
Grateful that Rome should be. Our well won fame
Will guard posterity, from age to age,
The record bear, we, glorious, could engage
In war the King of Kings, powerful avenge
Valerian’s death, and noble conquering, change
The tide of Sapor’s victories, our fate
The tyrant to pursue beyond the gate
Of Ctesiphon. ’Twas deemed some fairer meed
Deserved we for such patriotic deed,
Than the proud message, now from Rome you bear,

War on our State Aurelian will declare.
Petronius, deeply moved : "Mistake not, Queen,
The import bear my words. Not this I mean
Your fair domain Aurelian would invade.
Queen he owns you here. Here your throne was made
For noble service done. When waned the fate
Of Rome, the beaten, baffled Roman State
The crown conferred, wisely *August* proclaimed
Yourself and conquering Lord so justly famed."
"Gracious, indeed, your Emperor appears.
The limbs lopped off, only the trunk he spares !"
Hearing the Queen, Petronius deeply grieves ;
And yet with trustful mind, fondly believes
The Powers a course more moderate will pursue,
A peaceful course that neither State will rue.
"Must I, indeed, to Rome the word convey
No hope of better terms that war will stay ?"
"Would not the Queen" says Varro, "please delay
Her final answer to some future day.
The noble Roman, in her goodly train,
Aurelian's mind more fully will explain.
If such her pleasure, we can wait, some time ;
Meanwhile enjoy the pleasures of this clime."
"Thanks, noble Romans, grateful we repay
Your courtesy, although in what we say
Our people's fixed resolve you're truly told,

And we no better counsel can unfold."

"Our will you speak ; your words befit our Queen."

"Thanks, Zabdas, for your zeal. Must now be seen

What sage Longinus says ; not of one mind,

I deem, with us. No doubt, great force we'll find

In all he argues, never known to spare

Strong reasons why our views he may not share."

"Less firm I've learned opposing views to hold.

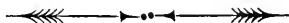
Delay command,—each will his thought unfold."

The warrior Zabdas smiled. 'Twas now agreed

Wisely to wait. Her mind of state cares freed,

The gracious Queen bids to the ready feast,

Each Roman senator a willing guest.



VI.

Visit to the mountain Hermit. Conversation when journeying to the Hermitage—The Hermit—Meeting with the Hermit—He discourses on the Greek Philosophy—Christianity—Its witness—Immortality—Self control—Heathen hate and Christian love contrasted—Objection to the Hermit's teachings.—Active and contemplative life—Christians driven from society by persecution—The Hermit's hospitality—Departure from the Hermitage—Opinions of a Roman Patrician—Progress of Christians at Rome—The State maintained by Bishops alleged as an Objection—The laws obliging Bishops furnish the reply.

Next day, by early dawn, Palmyra seek,
 Delay obtained further their mind to speak,
 The Ambassadors of Rome. The Queen and train,
 As day proceeds, the Royal City gain.
 Yet longer at the rural Palace stay
 Lucia, Portia, Piso. These seek the way
 To the far mountain cell, lonely abode,
 Where blest Hieronymus communes with God.
 "Strange must that Religion be," Portia says,
 "And far from true, that guides men to such ways.
 Benevolence in action, I pretend,
 Of Heaven taught knowledge is the wished for end.

Err I, mayhap ; yet oft have I been told
Christian Teachers a better light unfold.
Whence, then, Lucia may tell, the fame has won
Of sanctity complete this Hermit lone ?
If Christian were Palmyra, changed its fate
Would surely be. Head of a mighty State
No longer 'twould remain ; its people grown
To Hermits, from the bustling City flown,
To wild mountains fled, there, in lonely cell,
For ever more contemplative,—they'd dwell.”
“That Christian Faith such solitary ways
The saints enjoins” the Princess Lucia says,
“No Christian holds. How far this State it owns,
To some permits, the Hermit will declare.
Not mine, as yet, to claim such ample share
Of Christian wisdom, as to dare unfold
Its lofty teaching, although often told
The virtue it commands the most, is love,
Love active ever, gift from Heaven above.”
Thus, as they journey on, converse the friends.
Their path through woods, round craggy rocks now wends,
The lofty mountain, where the Hermit dwells,
They reach at length. Towering and huge it swells.
Before their view. 'Twould seem as if their toil
Were not begun. They now on foot must moil,
To the attendant slaves their steeds consigned

No aid affording. Painful now they wynd
Along the rugged track ; the steep ascent
They stoutly climb ; at last, with breath well spent,
The midway height they gain. There on both sides
Projecting a broad ledge, where lone abides
Hieronymus. With silent steps they went
Into the cell, unnoticed, so intent
The Hermit on the book that open lay
Before him,—sacred book that shews the way
Of Christians,—words from Heaven's height come down,
Truth bearing words, all true believers own.
“Holy Father, hail ! Graciously excuse.
Our sudden entrance. Come we all, your views
Of Christian life to learn. More and still more
We fondly hope to hear of precious lore
That in your mind is treasured ; this our gain
And sweet reward whilst near you we remain.”
Thus Lucia. As she says, complacent bows
The venerable man. “Your visit shows
How you desire the Heavenly truth to know ;
Nor is it meet a teacher should be slow
Your wish to gratify,—sincere unfold
The Christian's light. Would these your friends be told
The sacred message ?” “Their good will to hear,
I doubt not. Meanwhile, I with reason fear
To Christian ways their minds are not inclined.

Piso, a Roman, ne'er hath bent his mind
To Christian wisdom. Much our heavenly lore
Portia has heard. But yet the precious store
I deem she values not. I at the feet
Of wise Chrysologus have sate; 'tis meet
That I be friendly, and with willing mind
The study still pursue, until I find
The wished for goal,—the treasure, Truth, attain.
Listening. such boon I hope at length to gain.”
“Thrice welcome, Princess, to our lone abode,
Your friends we gladly hail. 'Tis not our mode
Those to repel, our thoughts who do not share.
True ways to shew them we no pains will spare.
The Greek philosophy is widely known
At Rome. Much wisdom it declares, we own.
In certainty it fails. Your ablest sage,
In eloquence the wonder of his age,
The virtuous Cicero, from Plato drew
And Socrates, rare thoughts that would renew,
He deemed, Rome's Social State. 'Twas thus he taught
As to the Deity. He held it naught
To teach plurality of Gods. God, one
Essentially exists. Supreme, alone,
O'er all he reigns, and ceases not to guide
The destinies of men. 'Twas, thus, his pride,
Living to teach, whilst at his death's sad hour,

In aid he called the self-existent Power :

ENS ENTIIUM MISERERE MEI.

To blindfold men this truth he could not prove ;
 From superstition's use in vain to move
 Their erring minds. Reason of no avail,
 Though powerful urged, certain to cause prevail
 The truth. "If God there be, let him come down,—
 Omnipotence display,—then God we own."
 So spoke Philosophy ;—such men's reply,—
 The force of reason fated to defy.
 The Christian Faith, man's weakness to relieve,
 All loving, seeks ; Truth gladly to receive
 The way prepares ; even God's own self it shows
 'Mong men Omnipotent, so to disclose
 Reality Divine, in plenitude
 Complete arrayed of Heaven's beatitude.
 Comes down the Son. Willing the Father God
 Bears testimony true, from Heaven's abode
 Light to give appearing ; by Jordan's stream
 Is heard his word. No false misleading dream
 That Christ from God is come. THIS IS MY SON,
 BELOVED IN HEAVEN. HIM HEAR YE, HIM ALONE.
 On Thabor's Mount sublime the Son displays
 His essence heavenly, its glorious rays
 A light diffusing brighter than the sun.

Moses descending, tells that is begun
The order new. Prophets, like way, pronounce
And with Elias, prophet chief, announce
The present God. Confirming more their word
Appareth the Supreme, thus to afford
Undoubted witness. Here behold MY SON
On earth bestowed. Lo! now the work is done
Of man's redemption. All ye, heaven's love
Would joyful share, HIM HEAR. Thus from above
Was heard the voice of God. Studious to prove
His origin divine, Christ gracious gave
Signs wonderful in Juda, o'er the grave
His power displayed, and merciful restored
Death's victims, oft by many friends deplored
The sick to heal an easy task it seemed,
And those who, lost, incurable, were deemed.
More yet he willed. A crowning proof he gave,
Rising to life, triumphant, from the grave.

In her sublime research Philosophy
Had vainly striven, her words all sophistry.
The life hereafter clearly to unveil
No power of reason ever could avail.
To him sole it belonged, who rose from death,
Powerful to shew, mankind, to life and breath
Restored, will live immortal and arrayed

In incorruption, by no fear dismayed
 Of death perpetual, the Christian's delight
 In Him to trust, who, rising, brought to light
 Immortal life, and graciously declared
 The immortality with Him that's shared
 Like his will be, glorious in Heaven crowned
 With bliss supreme. By all this teaching's owned
 Who Christians claim to be, who firm rely
 On Christ's true word and sophistry defy.

To reason's law obedient, it declares,
 Passion e'er must be. Plato truly shares
 This Heavenly wisdom,—a fine ideal,
 As the Sages taught, but never real.
 Their's only to approve and eulogize
 True virtue, failing ever the high prize
 To win of excellence. This meed to gain
 The Christian's lofty aim. Power to attain
 An end so great inherent ever lies
 Within his creed. To all this power applies
 Who faithful strive. Hence, o'er the Empire known,
 Numbers untold without reproach have led
 Lives blameless here, and oft have willing bled
 In virtue's cause. To the great source of life
 Strong they adhere, This LOVE OF GOD they call,
 Strictly enjoin—chief duty laid on all.

To this, in order next, they constant teach
That they each other love. Nor do they preach
That hatred may prevail 'gainst other men
Their thoughts who cannot share. With tongue and pen
Peace they inculcate. Not even hostile rage
And persecution's lash their minds engage
In thoughts of vengeance. Hatred, as it may,
Pursue them, hate they not,—for haters pray.
Wise Roman, you'll allow 'twas time at length,
The principle of love should reign, the strength
Renew of erring men whom hate alone
Held captive. Was no power to mortals known
That could restore. Affection was no more,
Nature's claims denied, rueful must deplore
Each family its fallen state. Direful fate!
Its members torn by the foul demon hate!
This strange inheritance,—this social blot
The family outstepped, and, baleful lot,
The State o'ertook, and oft dissension bred
And civil strife, when by each other bled
The noblest and the best, its fatal mood
Internal feuds and spite to quench in blood.
This hate contrast, with hydra heads that grew
And claimed to reign, with the blest order new
Christians proclaim. Descending from above
Like Heaven's dew, the sweet power of healing love

Diffuses peace and joys each willing mind,
 Its influence extending that can bind
 In friendship's sacred bonds, each favored State,
 Dispensing to mankind a happier fate.
 Were't only for the inward peace bestows
 This Heavenly love, from the great source that flows
 Of excellence, all men would seek to know
 Its passing virtue, in new life would show
 Its power, and like the Psalmist, ever raise.
 Long as they lived, the grateful song of praise.

'Aught is there, 'neath the azure skies,
 More good, more sweet than Concord's ties ?
 Less sweet the od'rous balm when spread
 On Aaron's consecrated head,
 Adown his beard and on his breast
 It flows and o'er his broidered vest.
 Less sweet the fertilizing showers
 That water Sion's leafy bowers ;
 Less sweet the sparkling dews that glow
 On shady Hermon's verdant brow.
 Choice blessing aye, by Heaven's decree,
 And life Divine its meed eternally.—Psalm 122.

“ Deign Rev'rend Father, kindly to unfold
 What Portia often has been vainly told
 Is Christian life. Appears it to her mind

Solitude so many vot'ries would find,
 From Cities grand and fertile plains away,
 To mountains lone the People all would stray,
 If Christians they became. Not so I've heard
 Would be their practice. If such end were feared
 New persecutions, doubtless, would ensue
 And Statesmen all their cruelties renew
 The world to save. If I remember well,
 Chrysologus was never wont to tell
 Such doctrines Christians held as would the State
 O'erthrow, cities and fields lay desolate."
 "Often, my Princess, bold men have striven to show
 In lights untrue our Faith. This well they know,
 Its excellence disclosed would quickly gain
 All trusting hearts and o'er the Empire reign.
 A life of contemplation safe may lead
 The Christian, meanwhile, he, in heart and deed,
 The rule obey of heaven born Christian love
 Not all alike this blessed rule will move.
 Will some, to this they're called, their time devote
 To kindly works and happiness promote
 Of friendless men. Were all to so engage,
 No work they'd find, no evil to assuage
 That others had not healed. True, we must own,
 Varied will man's employments ever be.
 Most men in action seek felicity.

The Christian Faith approves ; 'tis never blind
To human wants, and only wills the mind
Obedient prove to love's great holy law,
Nor shun distress. Truly in such no flaw
Our teaching sees, whate'er their chosen state,
Whatever here below may be their fate,
Whether in solitude they seek more light,
Or, active, in benevolence delight.
The Master of our Faith, as known, both ways
Accepted. There's no word of his betrays
To either life dislike. Mary his praise obtains,
Martha's good service his acceptance gains.
When high in contemplation soars the mind,
No fault he sees. Yet common to mankind
This state can never be. More humble ways
To find they fail not. Active Martha prays
No less than Mary who sublimely soars,
Filling her rapt mind with heavenly stores."
This lucid teaching of the Syrian sage
Portia, delighted, hears. A lustrous age
Can boast such Doctors. "Worthy of esteem
Your Doctrine. Yet blame not if still I deem
Misunderstanding oft 'mong men prevails,
And 'gainst the common weal powerful avails.
The wilderness to fill and rob the State
Of Citizens." Portia, 'twas long the fate

Of Christians everywhere to undergo
The rage of persecution,—every woe
That tyrants could inflict, their cruel lot.
If timely to estchew this baneful blot
On Rome's Imperial Banner, many fled,
Whilst others, firm and courageous, bled,
And sought, from savage men remote, to gain
The sweets of peace in loneliest mountain,
No wonder 'twas. On Rome be aye the blame
From age to age will blast her fairest fame.
In Upper Egypt and these mountains wild,
Where far from Rome prevailed a rule more mild,
Was refuge found, just as in this our day,
'Neath good Zenobia's wise and gentle sway.
Some, beyond doubt, with weight of years borne down
In search of rest to solitudes have flown.
This lot my own. In youth I loved to dwell
In haunts of busy men, and earnest tell
The tidings glad, gracious to mortals given,
—The Christian Faith, our surest pledge of Heaven."
The Hermit, thus, with care his mind expressed.
Kindly and thoughtful now, each noble guest
To his frugal board he called. Plain the fare,
But wholesome,—sweet fruits, produce of the clime,
And roots the Shepherds brought from time to time.
A limpid streamlet gently gurgling down

The rocky height, the rural feast to crown
Invites. Princess Lucia, with friendly care,
A freshening draught with her own hand to bear
Makes haste. No sweeter stream was ever known.
Portia and Piso both its virtues own.

Now warning gives the fast declining day
The guests no longer can protract their stay ;
An so the pleasing conference at an end,
They promptly from the lonely cell descend.
No time is lost ; the waiting steeds they gain
And briskly travel o'er the flowery plain.
Says Piso as they journey : " The lone Sage
In Christian lore excels. Happy the age
Such learning owns. At Rome we've often heard
Of Christians' mutual love. But still we feared
The spreading sect. Now that so much I know,
The mystery unveiled, their state to show,
In colors true, 'twill ever be my pride.
Nought in their Sages' teaching need they hide.
Attractive is their creed. Their charm of love
At Rome is often known greatly to move
Our People's mind. Oft do the Romans say :
' See how they each other love ! ' No such way
Our systems teach. Thus to their side they gain

Our Citizens. At Rome they now obtain,
From day to day, new ground. This growth no more
Mysterious seems. The secret's in their lore.
I knew it not. Like unto one blindfold,
I marvelled. Their wise tenets to unfold
Has deigned the Hermit, and no longer dark
Appears the Christian law. To all who mark
Their teaching grand, no wonder is the power
So many Romans draws, anxious their lore
To learn, sweet peace with them and friendship share;
—Their common good ; with us a treasure rare.”
To what Piso says Portia would agree,
If only she could fair and truly see
Practice with tenets joined : “ Why should such state
Assume that churchman. Antioch's Prelate ?
His pompous way but ill accords, I deem,
With self-denying creeds. To me 'twould seem
That he aspired to be some mighty Lord,
Rather than Preacher of the Christian word.”
“ The Bishop you misjudge, my Portia dear.
From foes the hostile prejudice, I fear,
You have imbibed. At no more state he aims
Than rank, freely by all accorded, claims.
Moves he abroad,—his Counsellors a train
Afford, but not for show empty and vain.
Their chief to honor eager flock around

The numerous clergy who by ties are bound
 Of sacred duty, counsel to bestow
 And countenance, the better thus to show
 The union and obedience they owe.”
 ‘ Lucia, indeed, I own, you argue well.
 Prelatic state I waive. But will you tell
 How Prelates’ tyranny quite patient bear
 People so wise.” “ Once more, Portia, I fear,
 You’ve learned amiss. Not much have I to show
 Of learning’s store. But this, at least, I know,
 Taught by Chrysologus, no tyrant power
 The Christians dread, their law to them a tower
 Of strength, a law that Prelates firmly binds,
 Reigns o’er Patrician and Plebeian minds.
 They who this law have learned,—obeyed, alone
 Can Bishops be. Scarce ever was it known
 Wrong choice to make. Still, men, you urge, will share
 Men’s weakness, in their pride, refuse to spare
 The subject Flock. Such course can ne’er prevail.
 Councils and Synods held powerful avail
 O’erbearing men to check. Of such the least *
 To order calls in case of need, the Priest
 Or haughty Prelate who should boldly dare

* When a Diocesan Synod meets, an official is appointed to receive whatever complaint any member of the Synod may have to make against the Bishop, and lay the same before the Synod.

To play the tyrant,—conduct strange and rare
 'Mong Christians." " Thus, Lucia, with you prevails
 The wisdom you pursue. Soon it avails
 To gain you to the pious Christians' side.
 State or no State, in this would justly pride
 Chrysologus. Zenobia's Daughter gained,
 'Tis sure the conquest of the East's attained."

VII.

*Important deliberations at Palmyra—At the mansion of Heraclius
 —A letter from Nephthali, the Jew—How he journeyed to Ecbatana
 and discovered Cneius Piso—His plot for Piso's deliverance.—*

Zenobia, torn from her sweet rural home,
 Prepares to meet the Ambassadors of Rome,
 To the Palace bids her Counsellors sage.
 Longinus, ablest Statesman of the age,
 The warrior Zabdas, Ægypt who subdued,
 Otho, famous in war, his mind imbued
 With patriot zeal and wisdom that alone
 A State could rule, Heraclius, well known
 For counsel wise, at bidding of the Queen,
 Prompt with many a noble Palmyrene,
 The Royal presence seek, counsel to bestow,

Their firm support and loyalty to show.
Zenobia speaks : “ Wise men and nobles all,
Who’re come obedient to our Royal call,
Our thanks accept. The question grave your minds
Will task,—whether with Imperial Rome
War we shall wage, her purpose on our home
Legions to pour, unless our rights we cede,
Our State dismember, and no other need
Of Rome received than the vain empty show
Of Royalty. That Empire we forego
Aurelian to please, the sad end and fate
Should be of blest Palmyra, and our State
So prosperous now, to waste and ruin given,
To us a poor reward who oft have striven
’Gainst Roman foes and glorious victory won
In Rome’s behalf, the King of Kings outdone,
Valerian avenged, to its pristine fame
By our brave arms restored the Roman name.
With freedom let each Counsellor unfold
What’er he thinks ; our pleasure to be told
What well the State may serve, our people free
Maintain, and tell, whatever it may be,
The surest way, he deems, that we can best
With honor meet Aurelian’s behest.”
Longinus, of the council chief, declares
That honor to maintain he fully shares

The Royal thought. "Our army highly trained
And brave, if by Aurelian constrained
Rome's legions to oppose, would doubtless show
The proudest feats, teach haughty Rome to know
The conquerors of Persia would not yield
To mightiest armies marshalled in the field.
Meanwhile, negotiation we should try,
Like Statesmen on Diplomacy rely,
'Tis nothing new for Rome friendship to bind
With powerful States. Were this Aurelian's mind,
Alliance to conclude a pleasing task
Would prove, our Empire's honor,—all we ask,
Secure, whilst Rome, no power no prestige lost,
Would save the precious blood of many a host.
Only let Rome's Ambassadors be told
How oft we've conquered, and the same unfold
To great Aurelian, with another mind
Our power he'll surely view, and then may find
Some peaceful way the prosperous East to weld
With Western Rome, so long an Ally held."
Now Zabdas speaks: "Most wisely have you said,
Longinus; thus, meanwhile, may not be stayed
Aurelian's ambition. With victory flushed
In Germany and Gaul, will not be hushed
His lust of power. He still will madly burn
This envied State by war to overturn.

Vain for us calmly to deliberate
Whilst, as we certain learn, by latest date,
He marshals his array, and only waits
For favoring winds to pass the narrow straits
And hurl his legions on our peaceful shore.
Such force to meet with Diplomatic lore
Were more than idle. War with war oppose.
This will the secret of our power disclose
And show the Roman that in nought we yield
To haughty Rome when summoned to the field.
Our People loyal are and to the Queen
Devoted. In our ranks no want is seen
Of Warlike discipline. Prosperous days
Our treasury have filled, while trade displays
New stores of wealth. We claim as our ally
The King of Kings. The Roman to defy
He will delight. Throughout the favored East
No more Aurelian will he bear, Rome's best
And bravest, than when Rome to overthrow
Valerian he met, proud Rome laid low,
And, Conqu'ring, from the cherished Eastern land
Drove back the fallen invader's band.
With such allies combined, we need not fear
The shock of war. Let Aurelian appear,
Our brave troops with new courage will inspire
The coming fight, with zeal our People fire."

“ If” says Otho, “ as in Valerian’s reign
Were now the Roman State, wise to refrain
From warlike toil, ’twere not your Otho’s mind.
Rome’s strength renewed, a better course to find
Must be our care. Already doth the Crown
Aurelian concede. What if he should own
The Queen, AUGUSTA, over all the clime,
Imperial honors leave, as in the time
Of Odenatus. Never yet the fate
Of Rome till now, that wisdom o’er the State
Continuous ruled. Aurelian once away,
Who will succeed? A weaker Prince must sway
The destinies of Rome. Then would avail
Alliance, Syria’s power anew prevail;
On equal terms, once more, our land would reign;
Her honors, fairly won, the Queen retain.
War ever doubtful is; more doubtful still
When leaning on the uncertain fickle will
Of ill assorted Nations. New the sway
That holds our Queen. Time to consolidate
So vast an Empire is our need, each State,
Foreign at first, assimilation gains,
And, final, o’er each part the Empire reigns.
Not this our case. By recent conquest won
Are many tribes and lands ’neath Asia’s sun
The greatness of our rule would weakness prove

Whilst many nation troops we'd strive to move,
The merest chance might wake internal strife,
The bond dissolve and mar our Empire's life.
Our Soldiers numerous are, well disciplined
And brave, to Queen and country loyal inclined.
But, one battle lost, whence our force renew?
Our ill success discouragement would breed;
And who could help us were there urgent need?
On Sapor, surely, we could not rely,
Beat by our arms, erewhile, compelled to fly
When over Rome he glorious triumph won,
In chance of war Rome's Emperor outdone.
Of mighty Rome's resources there's no end.
No doubt, our State we bravely could defend,
On Roman foes, mayhap, inflict defeat.
What if the legions, once, or more, we beat;
Their wondrous power intact would still remain;
Aurelian from defeat new force would gain;
Just as, when roughly spurred the fiery steed,
His strength aroused, will bolder still proceed.
My voice is, therefore, we, in patience wait;
For better days preserve our infant State,
When welded more in union through these lands,
Our people, faithful to the Queen's commands,
No civil strife shall fear. on alien foe
Alone, shall seek to war; meanwhile, forego

If need demand, some portion of your power,
Peace to secure, with happier times in store.”
Not so to grave Heraclius it seems.
War, the Queen’s only course, he clearly deems.
“ Well argued, Otho, yet I, fearless, say
Than formidable war no other way
Lies open to the Queen, the towering pride
To check of bold Aurelian. On his side,
No doubt, is great resource. No less on ours,
As will be seen when marshalled are our powers.
On Ægypt and its wealth can we rely.
King Sapor, too, we count a firm ally.
He loves us not, ’tis true, but Rome still more
He constant hates. Each Roman steeped in gore
’Twere his delight to see. Fierce in the fray
He’ll join, himself a host. Rome’s war to stay
His glory. With unaided force he’ll strive
The mightiest legions from our shores to drive.
Then comes our strength. Vast overwhelming power
Destruction on the Roman host would shower.
Zealous are our people. Just war to wage
For Queen and country eager they’d engage.
Against the general voice no words avail.
War, then, our watchword. May we soon prevail!”
“ No marvel, Otho should, o’er prudent, err.
Our counsellors’ and People all aver

Rather than Rome shall trample on our State,
 With Rome we'll war and trust to gracious fate.
 Our soldiers, Zabdas, marshal for the fight.
 Romans approach! May God defend the right!"
 So speaks the Queen. With *vivats* loud resounds
 The Council hall. Out on the streets the sounds
 Are caught, and echoed warmly o'er the Town,
 The People's joy and zeal to phrenzy grown.

At the Mansion of Heraclius.

"Of war and war's rumors, Piso, no more
 We'll now converse. What plans you have in store
 For Cneius' rescue, I more pleased would hear.
 Do chances promise fair, and how appear
 His hopes of safety?" "With pleasure I will tell
 How in Jewish Nephthali it befell,
 An envoy worthy of all trust I found.
 To Cneius' cause by ties of honor bound
 And weight of gold. Jerusalem to restore
 He ever burns. For this his growing store,
 Though rich, he labors to increase, and hoards,
 As if each coin would free from Roman Lords
 The holy place, the Temple's walls rebuild,
 Lost Israel renew, his People shield

From hostile power, once more Judaea's State
 With hard won treasured wealth create."
 "Two Talents;" said the Jew; "If such my meed,
 Straight I to famous Ecbatane proceed."
 Two more I pledged if by the dangerous way
 He perished, or, if Sapor's slaves should slay
 Our venturous friend. A letter late received
 How fared the Jew will tell, and how believed
 It comes to be, our Brother will be saved,
 Unwilling fate and perils having braved.

A hurricane that o'er the desert swept
 The burning sands in raging whirlwinds kept.
 From the firm ground with violence upborne,
 Then dashed to earth and from his camel torn,
 Brave Nephthali his life despaired to save.
 The howling wilderness his fated grave.
 Mustering his strength, he bold and powerful rose
 Forth from his dismal tomb of scorching sand,
 With pain and labor gained the firmer land.
 His faithful Benadad, though far behind,
 With toil incredible, at length rejoined
 His wearied Master. Now on foot their way
 Toilsome they pursue. Two camels astray
 They chance to spy. With these, their March to aid,
 The distance to "the springs" is safely made.

From this Oasis, with more ease and speed,
Our Travellers to Ecbatane proceed.
Sorely now does brave Nephthli deplore
His camel lost,—a treasure from his store
Of hoarded wealth, by fate untimely riven ;
Scarce named the sum for which he would have given
The useful dromedary. This the least,
Aurelians twice two hundred for the beast
He would have claimed, unless for the wise Queen
It had been sought. Favored he oft had been ;
Not less his People. Hence he firm believed
Zenobia Jewess was. Not, he conceived,
So born, nor yet received a Proselyte
Kindly she guards the conquered Israelite,
So warmly Moses loves, lost Israel's Sage,
Each true born Jew the gracious Queen must claim.
And with his Nation join her famous name

Soon as the Persian Capital was gained,
From goldsmith, Levi, promptly was obtained
Much wished for information. Well 'twas known
Cneius become a Satrap, would not own
The name of Roman. Sapor to his son,
Prince Hormas, gave the stranger. He alone
His fate controlled ; not as a Captive held,
Friend and companion only he beheld.

In his fine Palace Rome's Patrician dwelt,
Nor e'er the humbling pain of exile felt.
Whene'er the Prince appeared in State-like pride,
Was seen the conquered Roman by his side,
By Rome abandoned long, he could not feel
A Patriot's love for Rome, hard that could steel
Her soul to cruel fate,—fate in her name
So glorious courted, to uphold her fame.
At Hormas' Palace, near the public way,
A gallery, was Levi heard to say,
The street o'erlooked. Here, oft in promenade
Was Cneius seen, alone, courting the shade.
One day, underneath, loud crying his wares,
Was heard the Jew, when Piso, as appears,
Attention gave. Meanwhile it so befell
Ere Nephthali could his great message tell,
The Prince approached. "More leisurely to show
Your merchandise and more that I may know
Your secret word, an early day, at noon,
To my apartments come, to urge your trade
The apparent cause. Will then be safely made
Disclosure full of all you can unfold.
None near, 'twill be my pleasure to be told
The purpose of your coming. News from Rome
I heed not. Never more 'twill be my home."

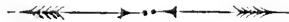
To noble Piso's friendly bidding true.
Punctual to the Palace hies the Jew ;
The treasures of the well stored pack displays
The faithful slave, his secret message says
The prudent Nephthali, while curious views
Each gem the Roman. " Now would'st please the news
From Rome to hear ? " " No pleasure can it give.
By all at Rome forgotten. here I live
In splendid exile." " You'll allow me tell
How when Valerian and his legions fell,
The dire reports by Romans all received
Alike by all confidingly believed,
No hope was left of noble Piso's life,
Each Roman warrior fallen in the strife
Together with Valerian. Such the fame
That spread. Yet still remembered was your name
And warmly cherished ; most, in Piso's home,
By good Lucilla more than all at Rome."
" Say, does my sweetest Mother still survive ? "
" She liveth still and mourns you, though alive,
Among the dead." " No word I've ever heard
Though sent I frequent. Hence I justly feared
I was forgot." " The mournful news received
And widely spread, no wonder 'twas believed
How to your letters could reply be given,
When each despatch was from its bearers riven,

Whenever sent, by jealous Sapor's Slaves ?
What Piso's House from dark suspicion saves
Of hard neglect, I faithful, will disclose.
Lucilla, sorrowing her son to lose
His presence ever in her mind to bear
His portrait constant eye was known to wear.
Oft have I seen how, as she kindly bore
Refreshment to the sick, it rudely tore
Her tender heart to think as she beheld
The image dear, no Roman power could shield
Her much loved son, to Sapor's rage a prey,
Nor could the grief restrain in tears found way.
Curtius, at length, doubting might not be true
The fame was spread, to Syria came, his view
Cneius to save if still his life were spared.
Friends at Palmyra Piso's sorrow shared
And willed to aid. Curtius their counsel sought,
Though first, your bonds to break, it was his thought
That he to Persia's Capital proceed,
And, powerless now his arm for martial deed,
Your freedom with the Ruler of the State
By wise Diplomacy negotiate.
It was not, thus, Heraclius conceived,
Curtius should act. Many dangers, he believed,
Such way attended. How the burning sands,
To him so new and all of foreign lands,

Could Piso pass? And once, if safely o'er,
He yet would meet a stronger power.
A lonely Roman in the Persian State,
'Twere miracle if he escaped the fate,
By Sapor's cruel Myrmidons prepared,
When he to Ecbatane unbidden dared
Repair. 'Twere now superfluous to tell
What brave and good Valerian befell.
No better lot to share could Roman look
Who such journey venturous undertook.
Curtius, thus wise advised, with thoughtful care
Sought Nephthali, who friends to serve would dare
The perils of the sands and Sapor's rage,
While treasure to increase, he would engage
By cunning ways a Brother to restore,
Favor obtain and heap the hoarded store
Wherewith he hoped, God aiding, to renew
Jerusalem. Curtius Piso's sole view
His Brother's safety." Thus spoke the Hebrew brave;
My welcome letter, then, to Cneius gave.
The Jewels now his care. So quick his ear,
Falling on the scroll plainly he could hear
The frequent tear-drop. Thoughts to entertain
Of secret flight his freedom to regain
Our Cneius doubted. Sore perplexed in mind
Of painful doubt no ending could he find.

Resumed the Jew : “ More news of Rome I bring.
The hourly topic—war. On rumour’s wing
’Tis borne ere many days have o’er us sped
His legions fierce Aurelian will have led
For conquest of the East, chiefly his aim
Zenobia’s throne, her Empire vast his claim.
No longer Cneius doubts. He would be free.
“ May we not, stranger, on some plan agree
My bonds to sunder ? Now my chief delight
The sword to gird and for Zenobia fight.
Ungrateful, cruel Rome no more can claim
My love, long as I bear a Piso’s name.”
With rarest pleasure now the adventurous Jew
A rich gem from his costly treasures drew
The likeness bore of grand Palmyra’s Queen.
Joys Piso in the gift, he ne’er had seen
Zenobia. Piso still more to gain
My ring he gave. “ A plot you have ? Explain
What it may be.” “ My servant of what race ? ”
“ Æthiopian, clearly, from his face.”
“ Not so, I aver, your conclusion’s wrong,
Ne’er to the negro land did he belong.
White is my servant’s skin as yours or mine,
Although in sable negro hue it shine.
Known to myself alone the secret art
The darkest negro color can impart.”

“ But, stranger, nought has this to do, I deem,
With plans my long lost freedom to redeem.”
“ Yourself an Ethiopian I would make
Ere measures for escape you undertake;
By skill undoubted I would change your hue
So that a negro only men could view.
This done, my pack you'd on your shoulders bear,
And thus disguised, safely and without fear,
In brightest height of the meridian day
Through Ecbatane you'd safely take your way.”
“ Great is your zeal, brave Jew, your wisdom more—
All perfect is your plan. Let's view your store
Of merchandise. Allow one passing day
For preparation. Then, haste we away.”
Thus briefly in the Jew's despatch was told
Whate'er, when it was wrote, he could unfold.
“ Soon at Palmyra may we Cneius hail!
O'er Sapor and the sands may he prevail!”
Thus did brave Curtius to his friends relate
How it was thought to change his Brother's fate.



VIII.

Rumours of war—Aurelian with a numerous army passess into Asia—Battle of Antioch—Cneius Piso, escaped from Ecbatana, marshalls anew Queen Zenobia's army at Emesa—A second battle—Zenobia retreats on Palmyra—The City besieged—King Sapor comes to aid the Palmyrenes—Sapor defeated—Siege works of the Romans—The Romans offer terms—The Palmyrenes refuse to yield—In order to save the People and City, the counsellors advise the Queen to leave—Flight of Zenobia—She is overtaken by Roman Soldiers, and conducted to Aurelian—Her bearing in presence of her Conqueror.

Now far and wide, on glooming dismal wing,
 Stark rumour flies, the woful news to bring
 Of coming war. Already o'er the waves
 Speed Roman war ships. Stern Aurelian braves
 Each adverse wind. Scornful his galley guides
 Grim Lucifer. Broods o'er her wave beat sides
 The exterminating Fiend. His dread care
 Discord no evil miss, no victim spare.
 Her certain right Zenobia to guard
 The foe will meet, war's chance and high award
 Patient will wait. Meanwhile, her trusted powers

The summons. Ægypt her tried forces, pours
 Into the field, obedient to the call,
 Syria, Bithynia, Asia,—all
 With ardour haste the Roman to repel.
 Persia's Monarch, although not loving well
 The Syrian Queen, the hated Roman State
 In war to quell deems it a glorious fate.
 Thus, to save Zenobia's Empire Throne
 A brave and formidable host is shewn
 Of warlike Nations, burning for the fray,
 All confident the tide of Rome's array
 'Twill be their glory to roll back and brand
 With foul defeat the legions dared their land
 Presumptuous to invade and seek new fame
 In trampling down fair Asia's spotless name.

Swarming o'er the Asiatic lands,
 In countless hordes, the fierce determined bands
 Of veteran legions pour the angry tide
 Of devastating war. Who shall abide
 The gathering storm? 'Twould seem as Europe all
 'Gainst Asia rolled its power, bent to enthrall
 The free born Nations 'neath the gentle sway
 Of Queen Zenobia. In the dread array
 Not alone are seen Rome's native legions;
 Germans and Gauls, the stalwart fierce Nations

Of the Northern Clime, rush headlong on ;
The warlike Alain and the fiery Hun
The barb'rous Goth and Scythia's errant race
Around the Eagles throng, resolved to face
The bravest of the brave ; conquering hurl down
The pride of Asia—Queen Zenobia's Crown ;
Or in the shock of battle glorious die,
Their Country's fame still brighter and more high.

Now, in proud array, from the mid-sea coast
Hastens o'er Asia's plains the invading host.
The vast power by fierce Aurelian led,
To Syrian Antioch first eager sped.
Zenobia's gathered forces there await
Their formidable onset, each their fate
Valiant to try. No weak Valerian now
'Gainst Asia contends. Romans burn to show
Their ancient prowess. Hard the battle's rage
When veterans with veterans engage.
Germans and Gauls 'twas Rome's to overthrow.
Zenobia's force, alike, the fate to show
Indomitable valor ; Persia's power
It shook when Rome's proud legions were no more,
Let not at Antioch its glory fade.
Dauntless resolve and bravery pervade
The Syrian ranks. Lo ! their stout horse the tide

Roll back of charging legions. Vain abide
New powers their onslaught. Aurelian's array
In broken order hurries from the fray.
Avails it not. Marshalled with his beat host
Are all the infernal Gods. The battle lost
Will they retrieve. Too eager on the foe
The horsemen press. This of their sudden woe
The fatal cause. Beyond the solid ground,
By evil Genii led, prompt 'twas found
They onward could not move, nor yet recede.
A deep and dismal swamp has checked their speed.
Death's genius leads the flying legions on ;
A doubtful victory by Rome is won.
Nought weakened, meanwhile, Zenobia's power,
Nor daunted : still to her remain the flower
Of veteran troops that conquered Persia's King.
These to new fields the valiant Queen will bring.
Cneius Piso, from Persian bonds away.
To stronger ground Zenobia's array
Right skilful guides. Thence leads the beaten powers
Safe and unbroken to the strong built towers
Of Emesa. There, for their Queen and State,
Once more they'll anxious try the uncertain fate
Of battle. Onward swift the legions press
Against the strongly posted foe, nought less
Their warlike fire, whilst ever on their side

Contend Rome's Genii, to save its pride
Their glory. Syria's horsemen bravely speed
To victory. The foe unseen the deed
Beholds malignant, ardent breathes new fire
Into the countless hordes that now aspire,
With wheeling force and valor, to regain
The battle lost, Rome's warlike name maintain.
Furious their charge. Nought 'gainst them can avail.
As at Antioch, they at last prevail.

Zenobia's hope, Palmyra, yet remains.
Its walls to fortify bestowed all pains
The faithful Zabdas. Strongly built, 'twas deemed
Impregnable. Thus to the troops it seemed,
New courage gave and purpose firm and true
That battle for their Queen they'd try anew.
Where danger most appeared, fearless, was seen
The warrior Queen. No City e'er had been
More closely leaguered. Nations in the wake
Of Rome, death's direful work to undertake
Rushed headlong on, destruction their delight,
Along their bristling ranks, guiding the fight,
Was seen to fly, on dismal lurid wing,
The exterminating fiend, burning to bring
Instant ruin on the Syrian State.
Willed not Zenobia's stars so prompt a fate.

Behold new hope ! King Sapor's valiant powers
In force advance 'neath the pressed City's towers,
Rome's bravest legions vigorous engage.
Success attend the noble war they wage !
So pray the Palmyrenes, and Lucia most
With Antioch's holy Prelate. " Guide the host
That battles for the right. From high heaven
Come saving help ! Let courage, strength be given.
The tyrants fell, so oft that cruel shed
The blood of innocence, in gory bed
Throw down,—a retribution just on those
Who, in their demon phrenzy, reckless chose,
In measure of their power, to drive away
From saddened earth, men's only stay,
Liberty and Faith—gifts from Heaven above,
Faithful to guard Zenobia ever strove."
A gleam of hope ! King Sapor, as of old,
The Roman force repels. But Oh ! behold !
Fresh legions press his slightly guarded flanks.
Sword in hand, Aurelian his shaken ranks
Restores. Rejoice the fiends. The war is done.
Rome and her demon Gods the day have won.

'Twould seem as dark fate, like a full sea tide,
Rushed on, raising to Ocean's swell, the pride
Of conquering Rome. The Persian power away,

The legions bold, no longer now the fray
With foes external, all their skill apply
The City to o'er throw. Now raise they mounds
All o'er the land the ramparts that surrounds.
With bridges to the walls these heights are joined.
'Gainst art and valor, powerful thus combined,
Skilful and brave Zenobia's soldiers wage
A doubtful war, whilst hand to hand engage
The Roman powers. As on a level plain
The battle's rage. Eager the Town to gain,
Legion on legion rushes, fearless, on.
Fast as the foremost ranks are overthrown,
Haste to the charge new foes in endless flow.
The brave defenders feats of valor show.
Their force with growing numbers fierce assail
The hosts of Rome. Nought 'gainst them can avail,
Nor art, nor valor. Vain Longinus' skill,
The bravery of Zabdas vain; ranks to fill
Of shattered troops beyond their warlike power.
Ere yet Palmyra fall, its glory o'er,
Propitious deign, ye Heavenly Powers, to save
Zenobia. 'Gainst her and warriors brave
War the infernal Gods. Liberty they fear,
Wise Rule and Justice. In her cause appear

The Power that shelters virtue. Let her speed
Safely to freedom,—boon, in happier day,
She ever gave to all beneath her sway.

The war, so furious waged, attains its height.
Maintain their ground, * though desperate the fight,
The warlike Palmyrenes, when lo! resounds
The trumpet's clang. Loud are its stirring sounds
O'er the ramparts echoed. A parley claim
Aurelian's legions. Becomes, it their fame
Brave Citizens and City passing fair,
Ere yet by conquering arms oppress, to spare.
“Now that, so bravely, in the battle field,
Your valor's proved, on terms we pray, you'll yield
To power of numbers.” Reply and watchword,
—“No surrender. With life alone the sword
We yield. Our Queen to save and glorious State
We combat still, and, fearlessly, await

* “The Roman People” says Aurelian in a original letter, *apud Gibbon*, “speak with contempt of the war which I am waging against a woman. They are ignorant both of the character and the power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations of stones, of arrows and every species of missile weapons.

Every part of the walls is provided with two or three baliste, and artificial fires are thrown from her military engines.

The fear of punishment has armed her with a desperate courage. Yet still I trust in the protecting Deities of Rome, who have hitherto been favorable to all my undertakings.”

Fate's just decree." * Promptly the Council meets.
 "In vain" Longinus says, our valorous feats.
 Whilst in the Town our much loved Queen remains,
 Will rage the war. Each pace the Roman gains,
 Destruction nearer brings. The life to spare
 Of People dearly loved boldly will dare
 Zenobia to fly, peace to secure
 And lives of numerous Citizens assure,
 Braving the burning sands. The Queen away,
 No more will Palmyrenes prolong the fray.
 Aurelian, victorious, such was his word
 By heralds given, conditions will accord
 We may with honor take, preserve our name,
 Our People save. leaving the Conqueror's fame
 To mighty Rome's innumerable host.
 Thus purchase peace, though trying is the cost.

Beneath the City's leaguered walls there lay,
 Curious contrived, a subterranean way,
 Its outlet near the allied Persian Power.
 This point to gain, with needed travel store,
 Zenobia sought. Success complete had crowned

* "Doubtful, however, of the protection of the Gods, and of the event of the Siege, Aurelian judged it more prudent to offer terms of an advantageous Capitulation; to the Queen a splendid retreat; to the Citizens their ancient privileges. The proposals were obstinately rejected, and the refusal was accompanied with insult."

(Gibbon.)

Her venturouss scheme, but for a slave she owned.
 This wretch, so loved, ere yet the Queen could gain
 King Sapor's lines and guiding safe obtain,
 Most cruelly her Sovereign betrayed.
 Though swift her Camel, Zenobia waylaid
 By Roman troops, was overta'en and borne
 In triumph to Aurelian. * Queen forlorn!
 No hope remained. "By what-ill-omened star
 Wert led, O, Queen! 'gainst mighty Rome to war?"

Aurelian thus. Not less Zenobia dared;
 Nor in her sorrow more the Victor spared:
 "My conqueror I own. That fell our State
 No arms of Rome the cause. 'Twas adverse fate
 That victory gave, and snatched the palm of fame
 When Empire against Empire strove. The name
 Of Rome Imperial no prestige bore
 Greater than ours. Our lesser State long wore
 Imperial honors. When the Roman pride
 Fell with Valerian, and none could abide
 Save Odenatus and myself the power
 Of conquering Persia, the East all o'er

* "She mounted the fleetest of her Dromedaries and had already reached the banks of the Euphrates, about sixty miles from Palmyra, when she was overtaken by the pursuit of Aurelian's light horse, seized and brought back a Captive to the feet of the Emperor."

Gibbon's Roman Empire.

That spread its terrors, WE and WE alone
The Victor met and to our glorious crown
The Eastern Nations all annexed, and won
The Power of Ægypt. By our arms 'twas done.
An Empire thus arose, extending wide.
Powerful as Rome had been, able the tide
To stem of strongest war, Nations could wage,
Fit, even, Rome's countless legions to engage.
If Victory has fled 'twas so decreed ;
And WE who Romans saved in utmost need,
Obey the Fates that call to Empire's power
Aurelian, Victor on this Eastern shore."
"Regret not, then, what changeful Fate ordains.
Queen art Thou, still, long as our power remains.



IX.

After the war—Aurelian in his tent—A friendly visit to Zenobia—Bilocation—A new and greater Empire foretold—A great City—An Empire destined to outlive immortal Rome—Emperors, descendants of Zenobia, the chief Christians—Idolatry abolished by decree of the Roman Senate—Heathens never more to reign—The Princess Lucia a Christian—Chrysologus addresses the Emperor, warning him against persecution—The evil Genii of Rome cause commotion in the Camp—Zenobia attacked—Rescued by Aurelian—Aurelian harangues the Legions, insisting that Rome must protect and honor ZENOBIA.

All o'er the plain 'twas soft and stilly night.
 High o'erhead, in the cloudless sky shone bright
 The silver moon, as if a tempest's rage
 Had sudden ceased and wind 'gainst wind to wage
 An elemental war. The battle o'er,
 Calm as the still winds, in fell strife no more
 Struggled the legions. Warriors brave
 To rest had sank. On peaceful earth's untroubled breast
 Each soldier slept, Aurelian's tent around,
 Sharing with their Chief, on the battle ground,
 The tired soldier's sweet repose. One alone
 Was wakeful,—Emperor Aurelian that one.

Stretched on his couch as wore away the night,
Rome's Annals to peruse his sole delight.
Bent were his thoughts on glories of the past ;
Chiefly how best of Emperors surpassed
The pious Antonines, his favorite theme.
The subject, then, himself and the grand scheme
He loved so well, and now would realize,
Rome's State renew and to its former size
Restore the lessened Empire, prestige give,
Glory and power. Thus ever-more he'd live
In men's remembrance. To the Roman name
New splendour from his deeds would flow, his fame
Rival Antoninus' glory, just meed
Of war's success. Now policy his need,
The conquered Nations of the East to join
In amity with Rome, and so outshine
Each Statesman of the past, excel each sage,
Eclipse the pride of Antoninus' age.
While thus he mused, there stalked into his tent
A stately figure. "Traitor!" On it went
Heeding not his word. "Guards, ho! your password
Spoke he? How dare'st thou brave my victor sword?"
"No braving of the sword is mine, nor fear,
As I in state ethereal appear.

Chrysologus of Antioch, a friend,
 I come, and first, my faithful steps I bend
 To Queen Zenobia, comfort to impart,
 Her sorrow lessen by our christian art."
 No more he said ; but hastened on his way
 To seek the tent where Queen Zenobia lay.
 'Twas strongly guarded. Of choice guards the chief
 Aurelian. No more than a summer leaf,
 Could they oppose the Saint. Of his approach
 Are warned the Queen and Lucia. Ere he broach
 His pious errand, mild he says : " Not risen
 Am I, a ghost from death. By virtue given
 To faithful Christians, the great power I own
 Of bilocation. Oft this power is shown
 When need there is to comfort loving friends,
 No less than to promote all holy ends.
 No cause, O friendly Queen, why you should fear
 When I in state Emphyrean appear,
 And form that Nature gave, my grosser part
 At Antioch still by gracious heavenly art. [throne
 Mourn not, my bounteous Queen. Though fallen Thy
 By vast and whelming numbers overthrown,
 These Eastern lands, not distant far the date,
 Will rise in glory new. A mighty State
 Will found a Ruler of thy race, his power

Greater than thine. Aurelian, who could pour
On famous States war's devastating tide,
An Empire now commands that's great and wide.
Compared to him that will the sceptre sway,
Both East and West, whose nobler, brighter day
Is near at hand, in history he'll appear
Brave, I own, and warlike, beyond all fear,
Barbarian, meanwhile. the tool of Fate
To quell and rule a semi-barb'rous State.
The glorious Prince to come, born of Thy line,
Magnificent, will renovate, refine
The Roman State, new excellence impart,
Adding all glories of our Eastern art
To Rome's dull monuments, alone the pride
Of conquest shew,—dread power can ne'er abide
The subject Nations. To the Eastern sky,
As by some charm attracted, he will fly
Malarious Rome, and build a City fair
That long will flourish, its most powerful sway
Outliving Rome's, growing from day to day,
More than a thousand years. Ne'er could'st thou gain
Such honor as is destined to attain
Thy favored House, thy Sons the Royal Crown
To wear unfit; thy Cousin is a clown
The sunshine of thy smile could ne'er reclaim;
Less worthy still to bear the Imperial name."

“ For thee, my Princess, who hast always loved
The Christians well, not lessened but improved
Thy destiny. At Rome a glorious fate
Awaits Thee, changed to Imperial State
Thy present lot. A noble youth Thou’lt wed,
Born of the Cæsars ; then an Empress made,
Of Thee will come the Prince of Heaven destined
Christians to exalt. To restore mankind
His lofty Mission. Of Christians the chief,
Bright honor will he give to their belief.
Its blessed emblem, now so lowly shown,
Glorious will adorn the Imperial Crown.
As time proceeds, yet at no distant date,
There will arise a Ruler of the State,
Sprung of Thy line, who will inaugurate
An order new, senseless idols hurl down,
On each time-worn barbarous usage frown,
Blind heathenism expel from sacred Rome,
So long of thousand demon Gods the home.
Obedient to his will, the Senate grave
No idol God in Rome reformed will spare,
False worship all abolished ’twill declare.
No heathen more, from that auspicious day,
The sceptre of enlightened Rome will sway.
Twelve centuries and more will powerful reign
Unbroken peace,—the Christians’ well won gain.

" Oft have you been taught the Christian way.
 No more need'st hear what Christian Sages say,
 Your lore derived not from myself alone,
 Much by the Mountain hermit has been shown.
 Now that each tenet firmly you believe,
 Remains it only faithful you receive
 The saving rites and join the holy FOLD
 At Antioch. This, need will I unfold,
 Your choice confirm with pious sacred word
 Of benediction, your soul in full accord
 With all who Christ's Salvation loving own,
 And seek through Him a glorious Heavenly Crown,

" Choice blessings on Zenobia ever shower
 The God of Israel! From evil power
 Chrisfshield you both! Now, ere dawns the new day,
 'Tis time that I should promptly speed away.
 Aurelian's tent I'll seek; thence to my home
 When I've addressed the Emperor of Rome."

Calm was the warrior Prince, Imperial schemes
 Revolving, now recalling favorite themes,
 —The Statesman Antonines, when lo! a scene
 Unwonted! In the Imperial tent is seen
 Chrysologus. " Thee Monarch of these lands
 I loyal hail! Power that by law commands

Christians prompt obey. Lovingly we pay
To Thee obedience, glad it is thy way
And policy our People to protect,
And thus a noble monument erect,
Enduring more and brighter than the fame
Of Antonine, who basely stained his name
With cruelty, by persecution sought
Our Faith to crush. Else, vain essayed he nought
Could dim his glory. His great deeds thine aim
To emulate. Success Thou'lt justly claim,
Far more than Antonine could ever dare
Pretend, in times to come, will be thy share
Of matchless honor. Liberty thy word,
Brighter thy glorious meed than could the sword
Achieve ; a noble lot ; around thy brow,
A halo grand—men's praise—will ever flow,
Ages will celebrate thy lib'ral sway,
Fame of thy rule growing from day to day."
So spake the Saint ; nor waiting for reply,
Swift, as on Eagle's wing, was seen to fly.

The Demon Gods of Rome, that victory won,
Ne'er could believe their fiendish task was done
So long as lived the foe who powerful strove
The legions to repel. Artful they move
To vengeful wrath the daring soldier bands.

As fury gains, they give their fell commands,
All o'er the ranks the hateful watchword spread :
—'Death to Zenobia !' 'vain she, vanquished, fled.
Her life is forfeit to the Roman Powers.
Her hated blood to shed, we claim, 'tis ours.'
The camp in wild commotion rages loud ;
Madly confused, the savage, vengeful crowd
Rushes on the Royal tent. The fierce cries
Aurelian hears, and to the rescue flies.
" What means this tumult ? who shall rashly dare
My conquering sword to meet ? Soldiers beware ;
'Touch but a cord—you're numbered with the dead."
So spake the chief and many a soldier bled.
Fear-struck, at length, the murd'rous bands give way,
Daring not longer urge the unequal fray.

With strength and valor policy combined
Aurelian—Statesman and warrior joined.
Victory to secure, he sternly gave command
Each rebel legion in his presence stand.
"Soldiers" he thus began, "to Romans dear
Zenobia's life. So will it appear,
When known, it was her glorious lot our State
From foes to rescue, when by adverse fate
The good Valerian fell. The Persian brave
She with Odenatus met, valiant gave

The man of our heroes hosts of slain,
The beaten foe pursued from plain to plain,
The desert o'er, to Ecbatana's towers,
Avenging Rome on cruel Sapor's powers.
For service to our land, so nobly done,
The title of *AUGUSTI* well they won.
So willed the Senate. We the same decree,
AUGUSTA still *ZENOBIA* shall be,
At conquering Rome the Imperial purple wear,
And highest honors of our Empire share.
They who the Queen insult, our laws offend.
True Romans all her precious life defend."





